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**THE ROYAL MARRIAGE
MARKET OF EUROPE**

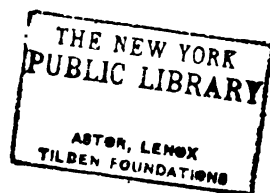




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PRINCESS MARY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

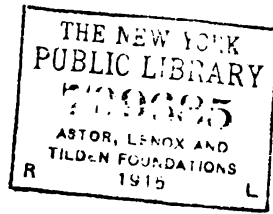
The Royal Marriage Market of Europe

By
PRINCESS CATHERINE RADZIWILL
(Catherine Kolb-Danvin)

With Eight Half-tone Illustrations

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN former times Royal marriages were considered the most important events in the political world, and their negotiation was generally entrusted to the ablest diplomats in Europe. Up to the latter half of the last century Sovereigns sought that the marriage alliances into which they entered should prove advantageous to the countries over which they held sway. It is certain that politics, in a far greater degree than personal feelings, were at the bottom of the marriages among the different dynasties of Europe, and that the relations of the various European empires and kingdoms depended considerably upon the direction in which these alliances were contracted. Notable exceptions were the matches contracted by Louis XVI. and, later on, by the great Napoleon himself when he sought the hand of the Archduchess Marie Louise.

At even so recent a period as the middle of the nineteenth century, the question of a suitable consort for the son and heir of King Louis Philippe caused ink to flow copiously in the chancelleries of the great capitals, as upon it was supposed to depend the consolidation of the Orleans dynasty on its usurped throne.

Later on, when Napoleon III. raised to the dignity of an Empress the fair Spaniard, Eugénie, who had

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won his heart and captivated his fancy, the unprecedented step was prophesied by many as being certain to bring about the fall of the newly restored Empire. In more modern days things changed, and it became evident that personal feelings, personal relations, and personal affections counted but little in matters affecting the welfare of nations, so that Sovereigns and their families found themselves more at liberty to choose consorts without any political interference or considerations. Like common mortals they were allowed to marry and to be happy according to their own ideas.

Nevertheless, some marriages—for instance, as those of the then Prince Frederick of Prussia with the Princess Royal of England, and of the Duke of Edinburgh with the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna of Russia—caused a certain amount of sensation in diplomatic circles, as to the possible consequences that might follow upon them. But on the whole, nowadays, these events are looked upon as purely private matters, which concern only those immediately connected with them.

It is probable, however, that, after the present war has come to an end, Royal alliances will become once more subjects of general interest, and of greater importance than has been the case during the last twenty years or so. This fact has led me to include in my book a review of personages eligible to become one day the consorts of European rulers, or one or other of their relatives, in addition to placing before my readers a short recital of the circumstances which have

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attended the unions of the various important Royal personages in Europe. I have endeavoured, also, in these chapters to show the part that these unions have had in relation to the Great War which has made Europe a continent of widows and weeping mothers.

The subject is equally interesting from another point of view, because it is tolerably certain that henceforward few Royalties will seek brides in the German marriage market, as formerly was customary among reigning houses. Consequently, the range of choice will find itself limited, which fact is bound to bring about with it drastic changes in regard to the leading dynasties of Europe, and may even do away with the rule which requires Royalty to match only with its equals. Seen in that aspect, the question of Royal marriages has acquired such considerable interest that it becomes both opportune and informative to relate some details of the Royal outlook in regard to marriage. It is this congenial task which I have set myself to fulfil to the best of my ability, with the amount of information which I have at my disposal, and in the hope that it may prove acceptable to my readers.

CATHERINE KOLB-DANVIN
(PRINCESS CATHERINE RADZIWILL).

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The Royal Marriage Market of Europe

CHAPTER I

THE HOUSE OF HABSBURG

THE Habsburgs, by reason of their ancient lineage, appropriately take their place as the first House whose alliances interest us. Its chief, Francis Joseph, was perhaps the first Austrian Sovereign who followed neither the desires of his parents nor the traditions of his family in his choice of a bride, but who married for love. When he was yet a boy it had been understood between his mother, the proud and haughty Archduchess Sophy, and her sister, Duchess Louise in Bavaria, that he should wed the latter's eldest daughter, the beautiful Princess Hélène, who had been specially trained to fill in due time the exalted position they had destined she should occupy. It had been arranged that the young Emperor's first interview with Hélène was to take place at Ischl, and when at last he met her there she did not appeal to his impulsive heart.

As a matter of fact, he fell in love at first sight with Hélène's younger sister, Elisabeth. He had not seen her for more than a few minutes, but at once

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declared to his mother that the unformed girl, whose education was not even completed, and who, ever since her childhood's days, had been allowed to run wild in the parks and forests surrounding her parents' residence of Possenhofen in the Bavarian Alps, was the only woman he cared to marry. At first the Archduchess objected strongly, pointing out to her son that the child who had captivated his fancy was hardly likely to prove a dignified and stately Empress. She had, however, to yield to the wishes of Francis Joseph, and two days later the official papers in Vienna announced that the Austrian monarch had become engaged to the little cousin, whom everybody had snubbed and scolded, until, to the general surprise, she had been chosen by him to occupy the first place in his Empire.

Elisabeth, in those early days, was as much in love with her future husband as it was possible for a child of her age to be ; she was barely sixteen, and knew nothing of life, still less of the world and of the part she was about to play in it. Her position, though it did not dazzle her as it might have done one less earnest by nature, yet presented so many advantages and was so brilliant that she could not help being influenced by it. On the other hand, she fondly believed that life would always remain the delicious fairy-tale it had so far proved to be, and when she found that it contained also many sorrows, the discovery made her bitter and resentful.

In intellect the Princess Elisabeth was brilliant in the extreme, yet her character lacked the balance

A SHORT-LIVED PASSION

vitaly necessary to enable her to fight victoriously the prejudices which her somewhat eccentric behaviour created against her. She inherited a good deal of the unconventionality of the Wittelsbachs, and when she found herself neglected by the Emperor, and not allowed by her mother-in-law to exercise over him and over her children the influence she would have liked to acquire, she locked herself up in a kind of haughty reserve. This attitude was not devoid of grandeur, but was bound to excite criticism and even animosity against her person.

Francis Joseph's love for her was of short duration ; he very soon turned to other amusements, and not only neglected her openly, but left her entirely to herself, stipulating that their children should remain under the care of his own mother, of whom he stood in considerable fear. The Empress, whom all the family and entourage were doing their best to regard as a nonentity, became daily less and less interested in their sayings and doings. She began to lead an existence in accordance with her own ideas, in which sport constituted the principal pleasure and the care of her beauty the principal occupation. She travelled all over the world, attended only by a very small retinue, and though she had got strong political opinions of her own, she seldom allowed herself to air them, or to attempt the exercise of influence in their furtherance. On rare occasions only she showed her preferences quite openly, as, for instance, when the Hungarian question came to be seriously discussed in Austria.

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Even in purely private matters, such as the marriages of the numerous archdukes and archduchesses, she never troubled to make the weight of her own position felt in her own family, and hardly ever said a word by which one might have been able to guess what she thought about them. She used to say sometimes that the less she heard about the sayings and doings of the Imperial family the happier she felt; and she carried this indifference so far that even when the future of her own children came to be discussed, she allowed the Emperor to have his own way, without seeking to learn what chances of happiness for her offspring lay in the marriages to which they had to consent. Though she did not attempt to hide the fact that she disliked the Princess Stephanie of Belgium she did not offer any opposition to the desire of the Emperor to see her wedded to their only son; and subsequently, when the union turned out so miserably unhappy, she made little effort to bring about a better understanding. Her daughter-in-law did not appeal to her, and later on she asserted that through Stephanie's want of tact, and her peevish temper, had come about the terrible scene in which the heir to the Austrian throne perished together with the unfortunate and miserable girl who loved him well and to whom he had become attached.

Elisabeth of Austria was not credited with possessing a nature capable of feeling any strong attachment, partly perhaps because she did her best to stifle the exhibition of any such sentiment, and partly because she had acquired a morbid fear of

THE TRAGEDY OF STARNBERG

learning to care too much for anyone or for anything, since the earlier disappointments which had cast such dark shadows over her life.

In the later years of her life she exhibited a great affection for her cousin, King Louis II. of Bavaria, whose character offered so many points of resemblance to her own, and his cruel end was a most bitter blow to her. She never forgave the late Prince Regent Luitpold for the part he had played in the dark tragedy that had culminated so sadly in the blue waters of the lake of Starnberg, and it is related that she always refused to see him whenever she visited Munich after that event. Apart from friendship she refused to be drawn into intimacy with anyone, and preferred leading a solitary, wandering existence, which carried her from one place to another in search of a happiness the splendours of the Vienna Hofburg had failed to bring.

Elisabeth's marriage cannot thus be put forward as an example of felicity attending a love match, though hers had rather been one of passion than of strong, deep affection. As happens so often in life, two characters most antagonistic to each other had been united by a freak of destiny, and had failed to get on together, perhaps because insufficient effort had been made to smooth down differences which were bound to become greater and greater as time had the effect of accentuating them. But, strange as it may appear, her personal experience of conjugal life had not inspired the Empress with the desire to save her children from the disillusion which she had

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

endured. Even in regard to the Archduchess Valerie, who was her favourite, the Empress had more than once appeared to be entirely lacking in tenderness, and when the question of her youngest girl's marriage came to be discussed, she had accepted for her son-in-law the Archduke Francis Salvator without offering the slightest objection, and though she had never got on with him she had wisely refrained from saying anything to her daughter likely to shake the latter's attachment to the husband she had been told to accept, and whom she had married with that absolute submission which has ever been the characteristic of Austrian princesses. And though she cared in her way for her youngest child, Valerie, Elisabeth kept her upon a footing of ceremonial love which never reached a substantial degree of warmth.

Francis Joseph always showed himself to be the most selfish of fathers, and, though old, tottering, and unprincipled, he yet contrived to win the affection of his two daughters more fully than did his lovely, gifted, and virtuous consort. He never got on, however, with his son and heir. With all his faults, Rudolph was at heart a gentleman, and moreover an exceedingly clever and intelligent man. He was in his way also a great patriot, and chafed secretly at the weak grasp of politics which the Emperor had displayed on all the serious occasions when the fate of his dynasty had trembled in the balance. The Archduke had never cared for the German alliance which was to become so precious to his cousin, the ill-fated Francis Ferdinand, and it is likely that, had he lived, the

COUNTESS SOPHY CHOTEK

orientation of Austrian diplomacy might have been very different from what it has become. But Rudolph died, and the succession to the throne passed to a collateral line, of which the first representative was to be murdered in the days just before the opening of the Great War of 1914.

Had the victim of the ghastly tragedy at Sarajevo been spared to become the ruler of the Austrian Empire, it is likely that the morganatic union, which he had contracted with the Countess Sophy Chotek, would have proved one of the most remarkable marriages that a reigning sovereign had ever entered into. The Countess was not only a brilliant, talented woman, she was also ambitious ; and she was moreover entirely under the influence of the Jesuits, who had protected her to a considerable extent when they had found out that she had won the affections of the nephew and heir of Francis Joseph. She aspired, and others aspired for her, to become at least Queen of Hungary should fate prove strong enough to prevent her from becoming Empress of Austria. Her sway over the mind of her husband was unlimited, and, perhaps, even in excess of the love which he undoubtedly bore her. Moreover, she had contrived to win the good graces of the Archduke's stepmother, the pious but bigoted Archduchess Marie Thérèse, a Princess of Braganza by birth, whose virtues and high principles had given her quite an exceptional position at the Vienna Court ; she had presided at all state ceremonies and festivities ever since the death of the Archduke Rudolph had put an end to any

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attempt to do so on the part of the Empress, who after that terrible catastrophe had never again, save once, shown herself in public. That occasion was the visit paid to the Austrian sovereigns by the newly-married Emperor Nicholas II. of Russia, together with his lovely bride.

Marie Thérèse had been one of the most beautiful women of her time; and though her marriage with Archduke Charles Louis, then old and stout, had been anything but a happy one, she had never allowed the world to guess the truth, and had gone about with a haughty demeanour, which repulsed every attempt on the part of her family or her friends to console her for the cruel disillusion which she had had to endure. When she became a widow her influence over the Emperor remained unshaken, and it is certain that had it not been for her intervention the aged monarch would never have granted his consent to the introduction into the family circle of the Habsburgs of such an outsider as the Countess Sophy Chotek undoubtedly was according to their ideas. But Marie Thérèse could when she liked enforce her opinions upon others, and she explained with such conviction to Francis Joseph that he dared not contradict her. Nevertheless, although the lady in question belonged to the highest aristocracy of Bohemia, he stipulated that the marriage must always be considered as a morganatic one, and that the children who might be born of it must never aspire to become anything else but Princes or Princesses of Hohenberg, taking the title which was granted to the Countess Chotek.

INTRIGUES THAT FAILED

When the union took place, Francis Ferdinand, whose father had died a few years before, was occupying the position of heir-presumptive to the Crown, and had already shown more than one sign of the energy of character he was to display so very soon, much to the surprise of all those who had prophesied that he would never be anything else but a nonentity. He was not an alertly intelligent man by any means, rather heavy in his appreciations, and certainly never brilliant; but he had something of that obstinacy which narrow-minded persons so often possess, and which is considered by many as firmness of character, whilst in reality it is only a symptom, if not of weakness, at least of lack of comprehension of other people's opinions. When he got an idea into his head nothing in the world could induce him to change it, and he hailed with joy any fact tending to confirm him in it. When, therefore, the Emperor William consented to receive as his equal the Princess of Hohenberg—the title of Duchess was only awarded her a short time before her untimely end—the Archduke became there and then the staunchest friend of the Prussian monarch, and entered warmly into all his schemes, which let it be said, by the way, were very much in accordance with his own plans, as they aimed at the destruction of Russian influence in the Balkans. This attachment of the German Emperor and the future ruler of Austria might have led to unexpected surprises had not the career of the latter been cut short, and all the consequences which his romantic marriage might have had perished with him.

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His younger brother, the Archduke Otto, had died before him, the victim of an unprincipled and vicious mode of life. He had been married to a woman of singular merit, the Princess Marie Josepha of Saxony, who had borne with an angel's patience the ill-treatment to which he had subjected her, but who was not possessed of sufficient strength of character and experience of the world to be able to guide her sons in their education and in their youthful days. She was proud and austere; and, being very devout, had all her thoughts centred in the direction of good works, and pilgrimages to different churches and shrines.

Nevertheless, she aspired also to play a political rôle. Her marriage had been entirely one of convenience, and she saw no reason why her children should arrange otherwise. She hated the Duchess of Hohenberg, whom she suspected of intriguing to secure for her sons the rank of Archdukes, with the right to succeed to the throne; and she used continually to talk to the Emperor about the necessity of marrying her own eldest boy as early as possible, so as to ensure the succession to the Crown in the direct line. The Archduke Charles Francis Joseph was a mild young man; he was the perfect type of an Austrian "nobleman," full of vanity, with very little learning, of dashing manners, good-natured, but could hardly be called keen-witted. Nevertheless, he stood next to his uncle in the order of succession to the realm of the Habsburgs, and, as such, his marriage was bound to be a very serious affair. Marie Josepha understood this perfectly, and almost before he had left

SEEKING A BRIDE

school she started looking for a daughter-in-law after her own heart.

Bavaria boasted of several whose faith would not prove an impediment, a Protestant princess being, of course, out of the question. The Wittelsbachs, for instance, had always been devout Roman Catholics, but the Archduchess did not care for an alliance with that House; its members had already far too often intermarried with the Austrian Royal line. She held that consanguinity was not conducive to happy consequences in the question of marriages. For that same reason she rejected the idea of allying her son to an Archduchess, though there were many who would have been but too willing to accept the prospect of becoming an Empress. She disliked the Orleans, because the example of her cousin, the Archduchess Dorothea, who was wedded to the French Pretender, had proved such a miserably unhappy affair. There remained, therefore, the Italian and Spanish Bourbons, whose blood was just as ancient as that of the Habsburgs, and whose opinions were entirely in accordance with her own. Among them the family of the Duke of Parma had captivated all her sympathies, owing to its strictly Catholic principles, and to the care with which the Duchess, a Princess of Braganza by birth, and the sister of the Archduchess Marie Thérèse, her husband's stepmother, had brought up her numerous daughters. It was true that imbecility was supposed to be hereditary in that branch of the Bourbon family, and that out of the twenty children that his two wives had borne to the Duke of Parma, several were confirmed

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idiots ; but somehow this fact did not seem to strike Marie Josepha, and she advised her son to spend a few days at the castle to which the widowed Duchess had retired, and to become acquainted with the many young and, as she supposed, charming girls who were sharing her solitude there.

The Archduke obeyed his mother in this as in everything else, and he started for the Villa Pianore, in Tuscany, where the Parma family used to spend its summers. When there he quickly became captivated by the youthful charms of the Princess Zita, one of the youngest in this happy and numerous household, and after having solicited his mother's and his uncle's consent, he proposed to her, and, as may be easily imagined, was at once accepted.

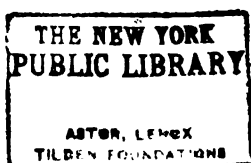
Strangely enough, this marriage did not appeal to the Emperor Francis Joseph, who had been secretly hoping that his eventual successor might choose as a wife one of his uncle's own granddaughters ; either the child of the Archduke Rudolph, or one of the daughters of the Archduchess Valerie, whom he had grown to love very much, ever since she had at last, not however without a sharp struggle, consented to admit the intimacy that existed between him and the actress Frau Katrine Schratt. But he was hardly in a position to make objections to his nephew's choice, as it was everything that the Austrian protocol, so severe in all matters where birth is concerned, could have wished for.

When he saw her for the first time, the undoubted beauty of the Princess Zita appealed strongly to him ; she not only excited his admiration, but also won as



Photo : H. C. Kosel, Vienna

**THE ARCHDUKE CHARLES FRANCIS JOSEPH,
ARCHDUCHESS ZITA, AND THEIR SON ARCH-
DUKE FRANCIS JOSEPH OTTO**



A RETIRED EXISTENCE

much of his old withered heart as he was able to give to anyone or to anything in the world. He even consented to grace the marriage ceremony with his presence when it was celebrated at the castle of Schwarzaau, in Lower Austria, and loaded the bride with beautiful presents, some people say in order to prove to the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and to the Duchess of Hohenberg that there was a difference between the treatment which he awarded to a morganatic wife and that which he meted out to a Princess belonging by birth to one of the oldest dynasties in Europe. Upon this everything came to an end ; and so long as the Archduke Francis Ferdinand lived, his nephew, Charles Francis Joseph, together with his consort, were kept at a considerable distance from Vienna, nor were they allowed to come forward conspicuously in the public functions.

They did not mind it ; they were entirely indifferent as to their own future, perhaps because they did not realise the importance which it was bound to acquire. They remained quite content to lead a retired existence, to play with their dogs first and with their children afterwards ; to ride and to shoot ; to skate and to take long walks together, whenever they found the time and the opportunity to do so. The young husband never gave a thought to the possibility of his coming into the immediate line of succession to Francis Joseph, and rather dreaded the advent to power of an uncle by whom he knew himself to be disliked. His wife, too, feared the snubs which she guessed she would have to submit to from

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

the Duchess of Hohenberg; snubs for which she revenged herself beforehand, by doing her best to make the former feel that she was but an outsider in a family circle who had put up with her, but who would never accept her as one of its own, no matter what efforts she might make to persuade it to do so.

In one respect the marriage of the present heir-presumptive to what will be left of the realm of the Habsburgs after the war was a success. It gave him a consort who will never aspire to play any political rôle in the history of her country, and who will remain content with her position as an Empress, with its attendant advantages, without wishing to influence her husband or to mix herself up in matters of State.

Zita of Parma had been brought up as a nonentity, in an atmosphere of petty interests, religious fanaticism, and more or less worldly frivolity. She is a fond mother, an affectionate wife, and a lovely little woman, who cares only for her household duties, and to whom a serious book affords no pleasure to read whilst the English novels published in the Tauchnitz edition are a source of unfailing amusement. She goes regularly to church, fasts on prescribed days, is fond of dancing, and as excited over a ball as any débutante in her first season. When the war broke out, she shed a few conventional tears, but did not come forward, as she might have been expected to do in her position as wife of the future sovereign, with any attempt to head a humanitarian movement to help the wounded or disabled. She is timid by nature, and perhaps, after all, between her mother-

ZITA OF PARMA

in-law, the Archduchess Marie Josepha, and the Archduchesses Marie Thérèse and Isabella, who started numerous schemes of relief, she felt crushed so far as any desire she might have for personal activity.

All Princess Zita's family did its best to persuade her that she was but a child, too young to have any opinions of her own, and who, having no experience of the world, ought to listen to what her elders told her, and never venture to act independently under any circumstances whatever. This was entirely in accord with the traditions of the Habsburgs, and far more likely to appeal to them than the eccentricities of the Empress Elisabeth, who from the very first hours of her marriage had refused to bow down before the strictness of the etiquette which prevailed at the Hofburg. The Archduchess Zita, on the contrary, was always most careful to observe all the prescriptions of this etiquette, and never forgot herself for a single moment, keeping always before her eyes the necessity of being the good child her mother had told her she ought to be when she married the future Emperor of Austria.

What she will do and what her husband will do when they find themselves seated upon the throne it is difficult to say. It is not likely, however, that either of them will show the least originality in their actions or in their behaviour. Charles Francis Joseph will be entirely in the hands of such of his ministers as he will find in power when he ascends the throne. Ignorant of politics as he is, he will content himself with smiling, and will still look at things around him without seeing

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them. He will, perhaps, shoot a little less and hold a few more military reviews than does his great-uncle, the present Monarch; and he will receive the ambassadors accredited to his Court with the courtesy of a man whose experience of the world is very limited. He will eschew talk about politics, and it can be prophesied with perfect safety that he will never indulge in the exuberance of language which distinguishes his ally, the Emperor William II. of Germany. He will be an excellent wooden figure on whose shoulders it will be always possible to throw the weight of many responsibilities, and he will accept them without in the very least understanding in what they consist or what they represent.

The Archduchess will spend her time in washing, dressing, and educating her children, of whom it is probable she will have a large number. She will have long interviews with her dressmaker, and insist upon the latter making for her high-necked or most modestly-cut evening gowns, selecting simple materials in unpretending colours, such as pale blue or pink with a sprinkling of white here and there to relieve it. She will put on with pleasure the Crown jewels whenever circumstances may require her to do so, and she will be very pleased whenever etiquette may demand her to give a reception at the Hofburg, and at the same time not insist on her entertaining her guests otherwise than by bowing to them or smiling upon them. She will be the conventional Empress, such as the Habsburgs have always tried to secure for their sons, and she will be far too afraid of doing anything likely to

AUSTRIAN IMPERIAL HOUSE

compromise her dignity, or of being original in anything save in the cut of her clothes ; and even this will proceed more from the bad taste in dress of Austrian ladies than from her personal initiative. Zita of Bourbon Parma is quite *à la hauteur* of the husband to whom she is united, and following the example of very happy people, they will never have a history of their own, or interest themselves in that of others. Their marriage was a success from the very first ; and in the Habsburg family such have been all too few.

The Austrian Imperial House has seldom been lucky in the choice of its brides, and the public or private scandals which have arisen from time to time have been far too numerous for it to be possible to keep count. In spite of the Emperor's severity, one Archduke after another tried to emancipate himself from the thralldom in which the exigencies of a merciless etiquette kept them confined. To begin with the youngest brother of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, he renounced all his titles and privileges as a member of the Habsburg family to marry the daughter of a professor of a German university ; while at the other end of the line the ex-Crown Princess of Saxony and her brother succeeded in shaping out for themselves a rather strange existence. There have been stories without number about the love affairs of the numerous nephews and cousins of the reigning Austrian sovereign. Nearly all of them seem to have conceived a perfect horror for all the conventions of their exalted estate. The eldest granddaughter of Francis Joseph, the Princess Elisabeth in Bavaria,

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the child of the Archduchess Gisela, ran away with a simple gentleman, the Baron von Seefried, who was later on created Count, and given the key which the Imperial chamberlains wear upon their backs at the Austrian Court. Her brother, Prince George, was the hero of an even greater scandal, when his wife of a few days, the pretty and merry little Archduchess Isabella, fifth daughter of the Archduke Frederick, ran away from him and succeeded in getting her union with him annulled by the Pope, notwithstanding the fact that divorce is not admitted in the Roman Catholic church. She was a nice girl, who did not deserve the unhappy fate which became her portion. After she had regained her freedom, Princess Isabella gave herself up entirely to good works, and at the beginning of the Great War became a sister of the Red Cross, working with the utmost devotion in the cause of charity, and tending the sick and wounded with an unflinching solicitude. She is credited with having declared that under no circumstances whatever would she be induced to marry again, and that her remembrances of her married life were such that she would never run the risk a second time.

The marriage of her parents had also been a romance in its way. Archduke Frederick was considered the best match in the Habsburg family, being the sole heir of his uncle, Archduke Albert, whose wealth could be counted by millions. All the marriageable Archduchesses threw their caps at him, and wondered whether they would be able to appeal to

PRIDE OF THE DUKE OF CROY

his tastes and to his affections. But to the general surprise the young man—he was barely twenty-two at the time—fell in love with the Princess Isabella of Croy, whose father, the Duke of Croy, though belonging to the higher order of the German aristocracy, was still looked upon as a simple gentleman, in possession of large means and an old title. He proposed to her a few days after he had met her for the first time. She was a clever, ambitious woman, who at once understood the immense advantages of such an unhoped-for marriage, and she did not even attempt to dissimulate the great satisfaction that she derived from the offer made by the young Archduke. Their marriage, however, met with violent opposition on the part of the Imperial family, who tried to suggest that it ought to be considered morganatic. This proposition stung to the quick the pride of the Duke of Croy, and he forthwith produced a sheaf of ancient documents establishing beyond doubt the fact that from time immemorial his family had been considered the equal by birth of reigning houses, and claimed for his daughter the right to be recognised as an Archduchess of Austria after her marriage with Archduke Frederick.

Fierce quarrels ensued, and at last the Emperor was appealed to; he decided in favour of the claims put forward by the Duke. The Princess Isabella became an Archduchess. In the first years which followed upon her marriage she did not have a pleasant time in Society; not only the Imperial family, but also the aristocracy of Vienna, were incensed at

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her elevation to a rank to which it considered she had no right. Foremost among the objectors was her eldest sister, the Princess Eugénie, who was married to Prince Esterhazy, and who did not quite relish the idea of Isabella, her youngest sister, taking precedence at Court.

In spite of these difficulties Princess Isabella, who was certainly a clever woman, contrived very soon to secure an enviable position in the Imperial family, and to be liked not only by its members but also by Hungarian society, who appreciated the fact that she settled with her husband in Presburg, and opened the doors of her hospitable home to the Hungarian nobility, whom she entertained on a lavish scale, a thing which her large fortune allowed her to do easily. She arrived in time to play an important part in the gay world, and her opinions were taken into account everywhere and by everybody, not even excepting the Emperor. She had six daughters in succession, and only gave birth to a much-longed-for son, twenty years after her marriage. The event was the occasion of much rejoicing, as the child became heir to the vast entailed estates of the late Archduke Albert, to whom his nephew Archduke Frederick had succeeded as life tenant. The heritage would have passed to a collateral line of the Habsburg family had the little son not arrived. The daughters became most eligible brides for Catholic princes, but their marriages were the source of much anxiety to their mother, who would have liked them to wed crowned heads, and who cherished the hope that the eldest one might become

ROYAL HOPES BLIGHTED

the wife of her cousin, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and the second that of King Alphonso of Spain, who was her first cousin, Queen Marie Christina and the Archduke Frederick being brother and sister. Alas, these hopes were destined not to be fulfilled, because the heir to the Austrian throne fell in love with the lady-in-waiting of the Archduchess, the attractive Countess Sophy Chotek, much to the rage of his august aunt, who, when she became acquainted with the fact, turned the unfortunate girl out of her house in the most insulting manner possible, and never forgave her nephew for the disappointment he had inflicted on her. Then, in regard to the youthful ruler of Spain, he succumbed to the charms of the fair-haired Princess Ena of Battenberg, disdaining the cousin in whose veins flowed the blue blood of the Habsburg Lorraines.

The Archduchess Isabella, thus baffled in what had been the dreams of her life, turned her eyes toward the young son of the Archduke Otto and the Archduchess Marie Josepha, who in due time was to replace upon the throne of Austria the husband of Sophy Chotek. But there, again, her ambitions came to nothing, because the Princess Zita of Parma won that much coveted prize, and the haughty daughter of the Duke of Croy had to resign herself to wed her own girls to private gentlemen of high rank and large means, such as the Princes of Salm-Salm and of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst; whilst the younger ones became respectively the consort of Prince Elias of Parma and of Prince George of Bavaria, the eldest son of the Archduchess Gisela of Austria. This last marriage did not turn out a success,

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because, as I have already stated, the bride fled from her husband's house almost immediately after her wedding.

The daughters of the Archduchess Isabella were not the only Austrian princesses who married commoners, or at least not members of any reigning house. Others, such as the second daughter of the Archduchess Marie Thérèse, the three girls of the Archduke Charles Stephen, and one of the numerous daughters of the ex-Grand Duke of Toscana, wedded out of their sphere. Indeed, the marriage of the Archduchess Eleonore, the eldest child of Archduke Charles Stephen, surprised even those who knew the democratic opinions professed by her parents. She fell in love with a naval officer, Herr von Kloss, who had no birth but plenty of good looks to boast of, and no money or high connections to recommend him to her choice. Their wedding was a nine days' wonder, and caused a mild flutter in the select circles of Viennese society, who had accepted members of the higher German nobility as husbands for its Archduchesses, but who could not digest the fact that a Princess belonging to the reigning dynasty had become simple Frau von Kloss, as the Archduchess Eleonore insisted upon being called by her friends and acquaintances.

There were two other weddings which caused even more excitement in Austria than the one to which I have just referred; the marriage of the widow of the Crown Prince Rudolph, Princess Stephanie, with Count Elemer Lonyay, and of her only daughter, the Archduchess Elisabeth, with Prince Otto von

PRINCESS STEPHANIE'S ROMANCE

Windisch-Graetz, a younger son of that princely family. The Crown Princess had never been much liked in Vienna, and ever since her widowhood she had had a most difficult and unpleasant position at the Court. She was compelled to take a back seat, as it were, the etiquette of the Hofburg not granting to widows any official rank, and obliging them to live in retirement, a fact which did not agree at all with the pleasure-loving and pleasure-seeking Stephanie. For some years, until her daughter had reached years of discretion, she travelled about, and avoided Vienna, until one day she became seriously attracted by handsome Count Lonyay, a Hungarian nobleman, rich and amiable. Being of a rather determined character, she herself broached the subject of a marriage with him to the Emperor, who was perhaps not so very sorry at heart to see her settled far away from him, and so readily gave his consent to the union. Stephanie's own father, however, King Leopold of Belgium, was terribly indignant, and forthwith seized the pretext to cut her out of his will to the fullest limit that the law allowed him, and refused to see her any more after she had become the Countess Lonyay. Princess Stephanie, however, accepted this decision with considerable philosophy; and, notwithstanding the parental wrath, she was united to the husband of her choice on a spring morning fifteen years ago in the private chapel of the Castle of Miramar, on the Adriatic coast, which old Francis Joseph had put at her disposal for the occasion.

It was related afterwards, not without some secret

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satisfaction in Vienna, that as soon as the happy pair had exchanged rings, the Imperial standard which had been floating on the tower of the castle in accordance with custom whenever a member of the Imperial family resided within its walls, was lowered, as a sign that the Crown Princess no longer belonged to the Habsburgs. She did not mind, however, and was said to have declared that the happiest day of her life had been that when she had ceased to be an Archduchess of Austria.

When the mother married again, the Princess Elisabeth was eighteen years old. She was very like her father in looks, though far from having inherited his intelligence or love for science and literature. She had been brought up under the supervision of the Empress at first, and of the Emperor afterwards, and had been taught all that a young lady in her position ought to know in a country where it is not the exception but the rule to rear girls according to the method prescribed by Fénelon, who declared that a woman ought to know how to read and write, memorise her catechism and be able to do needlework, but nothing more. Her relations with the Crown Princess, though cordial, had never been tender, and after the latter's second marriage they became cooler. Princess Elisabeth was fond of dancing and of riding, but neither a lover of books nor of art in any shape or form. She had all the insufficiencies of character and intelligence that from time immemorial have characterised the majority of the members of the Habsburg family, together with their prejudices and their fanati-

MARRIAGE OF PRINCESS ELISABETH

cism. But she was also a girl fond of the world and of its pleasures, and whilst waltzing at her first ball with Prince Otto von Windisch-Graetz, a nice, well-brought-up and exceedingly well-mannered young man, she lost her heart to him, and forthwith went to confide her secret to her grandfather, declaring to him that she would die of despair if she were not allowed to marry him. Francis Joseph was fond of this only daughter of his dead son, and had not the courage to refuse her request. He sent for the father of Prince Otto and told him that he consented to the union of the Archduchess with his boy. The marriage was forthwith solemnised, to the joy of the youthful bride, who was given as a wedding present most of the jewels which had belonged to her grandmother, the murdered Empress Elisabeth. The family into which she made her triumphal entry was granted the title of Serene Highness, which it had enjoyed, but not possessed by right until the day when it intermarried so unexpectedly with the Habsburgs.

There had been a time when the Archduchess had been spoken of as a possible wife for the King of Spain, whose mother, Queen Marie Christine, would have viewed with more favourable eyes the union of her son with a princess belonging to the same race from which she herself had sprung. The difference of age which existed between them, however, settled the question before it had been seriously broached to the interested parties. Apart from Alphonso there was hardly anyone in Europe worthy to marry the granddaughter of the Emperor of Austria, especially

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if one takes into account the fact that it was out of the question for her to wed outside the Roman Catholic faith. Perhaps the aged Austrian monarch took this circumstance into consideration when he made up his mind not to thwart her desire. He felt as much affection for her as his old, egoistical nature was capable of feeling, and hesitated before interfering between her and what she rightly or wrongly thought would prove to be her happiness. Sometimes Francis Joseph could be lenient, though in other cases he showed himself something worse than cruel. An instance of this latter quality was where the present divorced wife of the King of Saxony was concerned. Instead of protecting this impulsive and foolish, but not bad at heart, young woman, who, it is absolutely true though not generally known, had appealed to him for aid in the miseries of her conjugal life, he rudely thrust her aside, and found nothing better to do in the way of response to her entreaties than to deprive her of her rank and title of Archduchess, even before her divorce from the then Crown Prince of Saxony. His act shut before her all possibility of a return to her home.

The matrimonial ventures of the Habsburgs have been infinitely more varied than would be gathered from what is here related, but these stories concern mostly the younger members of the family, and have no political tinge. In this series I propose to deal only with such matches as can have an influence of some kind on politics, and certainly the love affairs of this or that Archduke with this or that burlesque actress of Vienna cannot aspire to that honour.

CHAPTER II

THE HOHENZOLLERNS

UN**TIL** the marriage of the late Emperor Frederick III. the Prussian Royal Family had been averse to contracting alliances with foreign princesses, and had always married into the German reigning families, holding the opinion that it was always better to wed women belonging to one's own nationality. It was only when the friend and adviser of the Prince Consort of England conceived the idea of bringing into close union by marriage the two greatest Protestant dynasties in Europe that King Frederick William IV. allowed his ambitions to soar so high as to dream of the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria as a bride for his nephew and eventual successor. The Princess of Prussia, who was one day to become the Empress Augusta, entered with zeal into this plan, and tried to further it with all the influence she unquestionably wielded over the mind of her son, the Prince Frederick. She had always been upon affectionate terms with Queen Victoria, and was more than delighted at the hope to be able to call daughter the young Princess Royal of Great Britain and Ireland.

As everyone knows, the marriage was celebrated at last with great pomp in the chapel of St. James's

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Palace, and the newly married couple a few days later took their departure for Germany, where they were received with the greatest cordiality and enthusiasm. Unhappily, it was not long before the Princess found out that she had very little in common with the people of her husband's land, and it is probable that if she had been less tenderly attached to the Prince Frederick her life would have been even more difficult than it became. As time went on, she realised more and more that it is always best for a woman, be she a royal princess or a simple mortal, to remain in her own country; so that, when the marriage of her eldest daughter, and afterwards of her first-born son, came to be discussed, she decided that she would not seek foreign alliances for her children.

With the Princess Charlotte the thing was relatively easy. Of small German princes, Royal or Serene Highnesses, there were not a few who were only too willing to seek the honour of her hand. The Princess at that time was not the pretty woman she became, but she was nevertheless attractive, and her character had not yet developed so unpleasantly as it was destined to do in later years. She had a small dowry, but the fact of being the granddaughter of the first German Emperor, and also of the Queen of England, was in itself an attraction, and gave her considerable prestige among the dozens of princes and dukes who figure in the first part of the *Almanach de Gotha*. Prince Bernard of Saxe-Meiningen had always been a favourite of the Crown Princess, and, having been constantly in her house, had contrived, notwithstand-

BISMARCK OBJECTS

ing the fact that he was anything but a handsome man, to win the favour of the Princess Charlotte, who guessed perhaps what a good-natured husband he would become. It was not surprising, therefore, that, amidst much pomp and festivity, these two were married.

The Princess Charlotte's marriage, however, had no political importance, and bore no later influence upon the destinies of Germany. When the question of a wife for Prince William, the future heir to the throne, came to be discussed, the old Emperor William was anxious that he should choose a German bride, whilst the sympathies of the Empress Augusta leaned towards a foreign alliance. She would have wished her grandson to wait a few years before taking to himself a bride, and then to marry one of the daughters of the Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, who had always been her great favourite. Bismarck, however, objected to the plan, not caring to see another English princess seated on the Prussian throne, and the children of the Princess Christian, having been brought up almost entirely in England, were far more English than German. Strangely enough, the Crown Princess Victoria for once found herself in agreement with the mighty Chancellor, and openly said so, adding that she felt sure a foreign marriage would not be conducive to the happiness of her first-born son, the peculiarities of whose character were not unknown to her. One had therefore to discover among the many German princesses who would be eligible and capable in due time of filling with the necessary dignity the exalted sphere of German Empress.

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There was at that time living in Kiel, in comparative poverty, a prince who had been deprived of his vast estates after the war of 1864 with Denmark, and who, in appearance at least, seemed to be an irreconcilable enemy to the Hohenzollern dynasty. It was Duke Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, who was married to the Princess Adelaide of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, a relative of Queen Victoria, and the cousin of old Prince Clovis of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, one day to replace Prince Bismarck as Chancellor of the German Empire.

Duke Frederick had one son and four daughters, who were all brought up with the greatest simplicity, and far from every kind of worldly pleasure in which their limited means did not allow them to participate. The eldest daughter, Princess Augusta Victoria, was a tall, fair girl, with a wealth of lovely hair and perhaps a superabundance of colour, which spoiled what otherwise would have been an exquisite complexion. It was on her that Bismarck's choice fell. In this alliance he saw considerable advantages for the future Emperor, and, moreover, the means to bring to a happy issue the quarrel which was still waging between the Prussian Government and the dispossessed Duke of Augustenburg. On the betrothal of the Duke's daughter with Prince William of Prussia Bismarck allowed to be returned to Duke Frederick the estates which had been confiscated at the time of the war with Denmark.

The Crown Princess had always been great friends with Duke Frederick, whose cause she had defended

PRINCESS AUGUSTA VICTORIA

with perhaps more warmth than prudence at a time when it had been impossible to foretell that he was destined to see his child invested with the Imperial dignity. She therefore hailed the plan of Prince Bismarck with joy, though not without intense astonishment, and entered into it with enthusiasm. The Duke was asked what he thought of the proposal, and, needless to add, accepted it with unfeigned pleasure. As for Prince William, after having seen the Princess Augusta Victoria, he declared that she pleased him so much that he was quite ready and willing to lead her to the altar. It may be that the apparent meekness which she showed attracted him, as he thought that she would never prove troublesome, or aspire to mix herself up in matters of State which did not concern her. The marriage also offered other advantages, the principal of which was that it put an end to the intrigues of many people who would have liked to mate Prince William with a woman over whom they could acquire some influence, so that thus they could check Bismarck's dominance. In this respect the great politician made an absolute mistake, because the young girl in whom he had hoped to find a submissive instrument very quickly understood that if she wanted to remain upon good terms with her husband she had better leave the Chancellor severely alone, and not allow him to use her when he wanted to convey something to the knowledge of Prince William. With her quiet demeanour Augusta Victoria observed very carefully all that went on around her, and had at once discovered that the supposedly close

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

friendship between her consort and Prince Bismarck had in reality no existence. She further perceived that Prince William, though quite willing she should help him on occasions when he wanted to confide in someone, did not intend her to know or to understand his plans and intentions. Princess Augusta Victoria therefore effaced herself. In a certain sense this was an easy thing to do, as she loved above everything else the numerous children who were born to her in quick succession, and was never so happy as when playing with them in their nursery. She had the good sense to leave her husband alone, and though she suffered keenly from them, she yet pretended never to notice his numerous divergences from the path of strict conjugal fidelity. Nevertheless, she determined that when she was able to do so she would not miss the opportunity to make him feel that she had been wise enough to keep silent. Princess Augusta Victoria was thoroughly German in everything that she did, from the manner in which she pinned her hat upon her head to the serious interest she took in all matters connected with the welfare of Germany, and particularly that of the poorer classes. She hated France, and French ways, and disapproved of the ladies who went to the gay city for their clothes and for their complexions. Her marriage realised the hopes of Prince Bismarck in that it did away with the last vestiges of foreign influence at the Court of the Hohenzollerns, which under her guidance became exclusively German. In view of the events that have happened subsequently this proved a lucky circumstance, because if Fate had

THE CROWN PRINCE REBELS

placed an English or a Russian princess in Berlin she would, at the present moment, have had to look upon things which could only have seemed hideous and disgusting to her eyes.

In this respect the marriage of the present German Emperor has been a complete success, and proves once more the unusual political instinct which was such a remarkable feature in the character of Prince Bismarck. Apart from the matters with which I have just dealt, the union was an exceedingly happy one, in spite of the considerable difference in the characters of the two people who had contracted it. They did not even quarrel over the education of their children, because in that, as in everything else, the Empress Augusta Victoria submitted to the views of her husband; she remained aware that princes of Prussia ought to be reared in a particular manner and inoculated from their very earliest infancy with an absolute conviction of the grandeur of their country. She trained her sons in principles of strict obedience to the head of their House, impressing upon them that they were but instruments in the Emperor's hands, and in everything bound to conform to his desires.

The Crown Prince was the one who gave her the most trouble in that respect; he rebelled openly against his father, and made no secret of his thorough disapproval of his father's methods of government. It was very soon felt, both by the Emperor William II. and by his consort, that the Crown Prince, if left alone, was in danger of falling under baneful influences, and they forthwith decided to marry him as soon as

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possible. The only difficulty lay in the choice of the young lady whom he was to take to his heart and to make his wife.

German princesses existed in plenty, but somehow none of them seemed to agree with the views of the parents of the Crown Prince, while Prince Frederick William himself was more than inclined to refuse all those who were offered to his choice. From the beginning he had declared that he intended only to marry a woman he loved and admired, and whom he, as well as the rest of the world, considered to be pretty. Now beauty is not frequently met in Germany, and this last condition was rather more difficult to fulfil than any other. Many girls were put forward as eligible, but none of them pleased the difficult young man. On the other hand, the Empress feared that her son might fall in love with some princess with whom she would not feel in perfect agreement. She wanted her boy's wife, above everything else, to be a strong German patriot, one who looked with contempt upon everything that was not German, and who repudiated sympathy with foreign ways, foreign customs, and foreign views.

One summer the Crown Prince accepted an invitation to visit one of his relatives in Mecklenburg, and whilst there he met for the first time the Duchess Cecile of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, the sister of the Queen of Denmark and of the reigning Grand Duke of Schwerin. She was about eighteen years of age, not perhaps regularly beautiful, but witty, clever, and charming in all her manners and ways. She had some

GRAND DUCHESS OF MECKLENBURG

Russian blood, too, in her veins, her mother having been a Russian Grand Duchess, and niece of the Tsar. It is true that the Duchess Cecile had been brought up in France, where her mother had spent the greater part of each year since her widowhood, and that she was credited with French sympathies and an overweening love for French modes; but this did not prevent her from being an exceedingly captivating little creature. The ever-ready-to-fall-in-love Crown Prince was immediately enthralled, and on his return to Berlin informed the Emperor that at last he had met the one being whom he liked well enough to ask to become his wife.

At first William II. objected, not because the marriage did not offer considerable advantages, among which was also to be reckoned the fact that the Princess was supposed to have a very large dowry, but because he was not on speaking terms with her mother, the widowed Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg, whose strong Russian sympathies did not appeal to the Emperor, and whose liberty of manners he considered to be most unsuitable for a lady of the high rank she occupied in the world. He was also afraid that this enterprising person might feel tempted to influence her daughter to work in favour of a Russian alliance, which the German Emperor did not desire in the very least. He would not have objected to the Crown Prince's desire to marry the pretty Duchess Cecile, but he protested most energetically against her mother, the Grand Duchess Anastasia. The question had therefore to be discussed with infinite care, and at last

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a compromise was arrived at whereby the Grand Duchess promised never to return to Berlin after the marriage of her daughter. At the wedding ceremony the Grand Duchess treated with the utmost unconcern and indifference the affronts which were showered upon her by the impulsive Sovereign, an attitude which considerably annoyed him.

The wedding was celebrated with great pomp in the old Castle of Berlin, and the young couple took up their abode at the Marble Palace of Potsdam, having also as a residence the smaller palace which the Dowager Empress Frederick had occupied until her death.

The Crown Princess soon made herself exceedingly popular, in spite of her love for French modistes, which never left her, despite the despair of Berlin tradesmen, who reproached her for her indifference in regard to their efforts to obtain her patronage. However, this was the only direction in which she retained the French sympathies which she was credited with possessing. Otherwise she showed herself an even more rabid German than her husband, and readily allowed herself to be inveigled into the numerous intrigues of the self-styled military party, who clamoured for a war and reproached the Emperor for his disregard of certain things in which their fevered minds beheld an affront to the grandeur of that Germany, whom they wished to see omnipotent over the whole of the world. When the present war was declared the Crown Princess made herself conspicuous by the energy with which she entered into its preparations, and she was made

THE GERMAN CROWN PRINCESS

the object of tumultuous ovations on the part of the Berlin mob, which she accepted with the utmost grace and apparent gratitude. Ever since she had been married she had instilled into the mind of the Crown Prince that the Emperor was getting old and had lost part of his former audacity and energy. It was high time, therefore, she perpetually told the Crown Prince, that he should take matters in hand himself and try to give new impulse to German politics, to lead his Fatherland forward toward a new era, in which Germany should have dominion over the whole world.

The Crown Princess is to-day perhaps the most popular woman in the whole of Germany ; she knows this well, and does her best to keep up the popularity which she has acquired among all classes of the nation. She is the "strong man" in her home, and the Crown Prince would never dare to take any serious step without previously consulting her and seeking her advice and co-operation. She is not the effaced kind of woman that her mother-in-law has schooled herself into appearing, and she would feel very unhappy were she not kept informed as to everything that the Crown Prince intends doing or saying. Her influence over him is very great, and unhappily it is not by any means a good one ; on the contrary, it is a most disturbing element, not only in her own household, but also in matters of State. She wants to control affairs for which she is neither apt by her intelligence, nor prepared by her education. A severe critic once said that she is "a perfect type of a degenerated

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

sovereign who tries to seek not the affection of her people, but the approval by the mob of her actions, and her various ways of courting its popularity and of appealing to its evil passions."

The Crown Princess Cecile will become later on, if ever her husband ascends the throne, a difficult factor in German politics, and her marriage with him has had, and will have still more tremendous consequences, from the political point of view, if only on account of the importance that she will assume as Queen in a country where feminine wishes and influence have hitherto had little influence. The strangest thing of all is that this princess, who has already acquired such a power in the country over which she will reign one day, is far from having the intelligence and the education of either the Empress Augusta Victoria, or the Empress Frederick, who yet were never allowed to have an opinion of their own, or to have anything to say in political matters. One feels impelled to moralise that the proverb which speaks of every person getting the fate that he or she deserves can also be applied to nations, because no sovereign could have suited infatuated Germany better than the silly, giddy, amusing, and popular little girl whom fate has linked to its future monarch.

The Empress, though upon affectionate terms with the Crown Princess, never felt quite at her ease with her. The Empress Augusta Victoria kept her affections for another daughter-in-law, the wife of her fourth son, Prince Augustus William. The Princess Alexandra, who was, moreover, the Empress's own

A BRUTAL MARRIAGE

niece—being the child of her sister, Caroline Mathilde, wedded to a Prince of Schleswig-Holstein-Glücksburg—has always shown herself willing to listen to her mother-in-law. She is a nice girl—fair, fat, and a perfect type of the “*Deutsche Hausfrau*,” dear to the souls of German novel-writers. The marriage had been arranged by Augusta Victoria, and, though one of convenience, has turned out as well and as happily as the union of two perfect nonentities can be.

The other sons of the Emperor William are all married, with the exception of the youngest one, Prince Joachim. Prince Eitel Fritz, who is his father's favourite, being as tall as he is brutal, and as ferocious as he is fat, took to himself a wife almost by compulsion, and in order to put an end to ugly rumours that were flying about Berlin concerning him and his strange propensities. He married a lady much older than himself, the daughter of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg and of that beautiful Princess Elisabeth of Prussia, who died so young and so generally regretted. The Princess Sophy Charlotte was pretty, rich, and supposed to be very clever; moreover, she was not happy in her own home, where reigned a stepmother with whom she did not agree. At first the Princess was warmly welcomed in Berlin, but nevertheless did not succeed in making friends there. It was related that when she found out to what a sorry personage she had linked her fate she withdrew into a kind of haughty reserve, from which she has never emerged. She is scarcely ever seen anywhere, is very little known in Berlin society, and no matter to what important

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position her husband may rise—and it is rumoured that the Emperor has got great plans in his mind concerning the future of that favourite son of his—she will never do anything to popularise it.

The German Emperor always favoured early marriages, and is naturally inclined to be a matchmaker, more so than the Empress whose temperament was far too placid to indulge in any kind of intrigues, even those of matrimonial intent. He therefore encouraged his sons to make homes for themselves, and it was only when Prince Oscar of Prussia, breaking with the traditions of his family, announced his intention of wedding his mother's lady-in-waiting, the Countess Ina von Bassewitz, that his father objected and put a veto on this virtuous intention. The story created a considerable scandal, and led to much talk among those select circles of Court society where the sayings and doings of every member of the Imperial family are watched with keen interest. Nevertheless, the Prince kept firm in his intention to ally himself to a simple countess, and he succeeded in winning over to his side his sister, the Duchess of Brunswick, and in the end she induced the Emperor to yield to his son's desire. This little romance excited a great deal of interest, and it is likely that Society would have talked about it for a longer time than it did had not the war's advent diverted the attention of the public into another and more serious channel. The war, too, has drawn together more than would have been the case under ordinary circumstances, the young wife of Prince Oscar to her parents-in-law, by reason of a

THE DUKE OF CUMBERLAND

common anxiety because her young husband fell dangerously ill as a result of the fatigues to which he had been subjected during the first months of the war.

The matrimonial future of the Duchess of Brunswick, to whom I have just referred, was the subject of wide conjecture ever since her birth. It was known that her father, the Emperor William II., had great ambitions in regard to her, and at one time rumour would have it that, in spite of the disparity in age, his great hope was to arrange a union between Princess Victoria Louise and the Prince of Wales, and it was partly with this intention that he had taken her more than once to England to win the favour of Queen Mary. It turned out, however, that in reality William II. nursed quite different ambitions concerning the future of his spoilt darling. In spite of his brutality, he had a sense of justice which now and again was manifested, especially in cases when it might advance his own schemes. The German Government held the Duchy of Brunswick and the millions which its possession entailed, as well as the confiscated fortune of the last King of Hanover. The Emperor William II., whilst declaring that in his opinion both Duchy and millions ought to be returned to their rightful owners, was yet sore at heart to have to give them up. He then conceived the idea that he could disarm the enmity of the Duke of Cumberland by seeking an alliance between Princess Victoria Louise and the Duke's only son, Prince Ernest. The negotiations were not easy to conduct, but at last they succeeded, and matters were arranged so far that a happy consummation depended

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only on the wishes of the Princess, whose decision her father would certainly never challenge.

The Princess was a typical example of those latter-day girls who think that they know everything better than their elders, and who, under the pretext of being romantic, sometimes sacrifice considerable advantages for the sake of asserting themselves in opposition to their elders. She had refused several excellent matches already, and the Emperor began to fear that she might become entangled into a serious flirtation with some foreign Royalty whom she might meet abroad. He wanted, above everything else, that she should never forsake the land of her birth. He contrived that Prince Ernest Augustus of Cumberland should meet the Princess somewhere in Switzerland, and see her there under more easy and familiar circumstances than he could have done at the Berlin Court. His anticipations turned out to be correct. Princess Victoria Louise looked upon her newly-found lover with lenient eyes and fell more easily in love, because she imagined her affections would meet with considerable resistance on the part of the Emperor, whom she believed to be still very much incensed against the Duke of Cumberland's pretensions to the Crown of Hanover. All her romantic instincts were aroused; she considered herself, indeed, rather in the light of a Juliet. She told her father of her intentions, and though William II. objected, yet he did so in such a manner that it only encouraged her the more in her determination to become the wife of Prince Ernest Augustus, and at last she won from the German

A LONG-STANDING FEUD ENDS

Emperor a consent he had been eager to give long before she expected it.

The match was viewed with undivided enthusiasm by the German public, but yet gave rise to considerable criticism. The Crown Prince objected to it energetically, and declared that, at all events, the Duchy of Brunswick ought never to be restored to the fiancé of his sister, who, naturally, was hotly indignant.

Nevertheless, the wedding took place, and certainly it was one of the most important from the political point of view that Royalty had contracted for half a century. Not only did it put an end to a long-standing feud, but it united the two oldest Protestant dynasties in Germany. The Duke of Cumberland himself was not so enthusiastic about it, as might have been supposed, and it was observed that during the wedding festivities, he kept much aloof from the Emperor. The Duchess, on the contrary, looked radiant; she was delighted at the good fortune which had befallen her son. And when the Duchess of Brunswick gave birth to her two children, the Duke of Cumberland did not attend the christening ceremony of either, though he allowed his wife to do so, and even sent a handsome present to his daughter-in-law. No matter what had happened, the old Duke could not bring himself to look with favour upon the usurpers of his birthright, or to consider the possession of the Duchy of Brunswick by his son as a sufficient compensation for the lost crown of Hanover.

Among the sons and daughters of the many Royal and Serene Highnesses with which Germany abounds,

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there is a widespread ambition to become united to members of the Russian Imperial Family. The aspirations of the "*petitesses d'Allemagne*" were always in that direction, because of the special privileges enjoyed by the grand duchesses of Russia ; on the other hand, the princes of Germany dreamed of the lavish dowries which would come under their control were they to wed a Russian princess. This appetite for Russian marriages reminds me of an amusing anecdote which was circulated at the beginning of the present war. It was related that a certain German princess, who boasted of some six or seven daughters, when she heard that the German Emperor had sent an ultimatum to Russia, exclaimed : " How could he do such a thing ? It is perfectly monstrous ; we shall never now be able to marry our girls to a grand duke ! " I do not vouch for the accuracy of this story ; but, true or not, it expresses perfectly the feelings of the majority of German princesses, who carefully brought up their daughters with an eye on the possibility of one day marrying into the Russian Imperial family.

This wish to become allied to the Romanoffs was shared to a certain degree by the Emperor William himself, who would not have felt sorry to become the father-in-law of one of the daughters of the Tsar. He had to abandon the idea, however ; and perhaps this had something to do with his animosity against the Emperor Nicholas and the Empress Alexandra, of whom he had made such a fuss at the time of her marriage, when he had still hoped by her influence to draw Russia away from France.

BERLIN IS DISAPPOINTED

It is pretty certain that once the war is over, it will be extremely difficult for German Royalties to marry outside their own country, and this will most certainly exercise some influence on the fate of the girls of Royal origin and Teuton blood. Almost certainly they will find themselves compelled to look for husbands among common mortals, and this will not be easy, as they are mostly endowed with insufficient wealth and overwhelming pretensions. The dowry of a German princess is seldom more than modest. For instance, when the daughters of the late Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia were married, they received ten thousand pounds as a wedding portion from the State, and the same thing happened with the sisters of the present Emperor. The latter, however, had inherited their father's private fortune; or, at least, what the Emperor Frederick had been able to leave out of the Crown *fidei-commissum*, the revenues of which he enjoyed for such a short time. The Empress Victoria, too, was rich, owing to the generosity of the old Duchess of Galliera; and her daughters were considered to be very well dowered brides. The question of their marriage was therefore a relatively easy problem, though most intense disappointment was felt in Berlin when the then heir to the Russian throne could not be induced to propose to the youngest of these girls, the Princess Margaret, or "Mossie," as she was called in her family circle. Strenuous efforts had been made to this end, but the Empress of Russia—whose Danish origin and sympathies were not in favour of Prussia, who had treated her own country so badly

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—set herself resolutely against the idea, and the Emperor William had to console himself by arranging the betrothal of the Princess Sophy of Prussia, his third sister, with the Crown Prince of Greece, in the hope that the influence she would naturally come to exercise in the course of time at Athens might prove beneficial to German interests in the East. The Princess Mossie married a Prince of Hesse, by whom she had six boys, and as he lived quite near to the Castle of Cronberg, where her mother, the Empress Victoria, resided, she saw much more of the latter than did her other sisters, and finally inherited most of her wealth, together with that splendid residence. But neither she nor her two other sisters, Princess Charlotte of Meiningen and Princess Victoria of Lippe, made brilliant marriages, and they had to content themselves with very inferior positions.

My reference to inferior marriages reminds me of the two sisters of the present Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, who were mentioned at one time as possible brides for the sons of the Emperor William. They were pretty girls, and might have made excellent matches, but the elder one, the Princess Marie, for reasons it is better not to enter into here, married a Frenchman, the Comte de Jametel, from whom she obtained a divorce a few years ago. Now she is remarried to a Prince of Lippe, as poor as he is proud, and seems to get on very well with him ; or, at least, as well as it is possible under the peculiar circumstances that made her position so very delicate at the time she married the Comte de Jametel.

THREE DESIRABLE PRINCESSES

As for her younger sister, the Princess Jutta, she was taken pity upon by a cousin of her father, good and kind Princess Hélène of Saxe-Altenburg, the daughter of the Grand Duchess Catherine of Russia. Princess Hélène took her to Petersburg, where she tried to find a husband for her ; an effort in which she succeeded, because ultimately a marriage was arranged for her with the eldest son of the King of Montenegro. I shall have something to say about her later on.

There were, however, among German marriageable princesses three young ladies, who, by reason of their good looks and their large dowries, were the cynosure of all eyes in the Royal marriage market of the "glorious Fatherland." They were the daughters of the Duke of Cumberland and of the Princess Thyra of Denmark, his consort. It is true that their father was not in possession of the throne or of the fortune to which he had been born, but still he could boast of being many times a millionaire, and moreover was kin to Queen Alexandra of England and to the Empress Dowager of Russia. This relationship made them the more attractive to the many would-be suitors who gathered around them in the hope of attracting their fancy and of winning their affections. The eldest, the Princess Marie, was very quickly married to Prince Maximilian of Baden, the future Sovereign of that Duchy, and went to live at Karlsruhe, where she soon made herself extremely popular ; whilst the youngest, Princess Alexandra, became in due course the wife of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, the son of the Grand Duchess Anastasia of Russia.

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The Grand Duke was young, handsome, enormously rich, and the Castle of Schwerin, where he took his wife after their marriage, was one of the most splendid Royal residences in Germany. The new Grand Duchess soon won the golden opinions of her own subjects, and was intensely popular everywhere she went. The Emperor William, who at that time was already nursing the dream of a Cumberland marriage for his daughter, invited the Grand Ducal couple to Berlin, and tried to make himself very pleasant to the bride, who however did not respond; indeed, she showed him openly that she was strongly prejudiced against him. In time, however, her opinion changed, and, under the influence of her surroundings, she became also more German in thought; of late, indeed, the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin is considered one of the staunchest admirers of that German "kultur" to which we owe the ruthless destruction of so many relics of the past by the hordes of William II., a destruction wrought deliberately and under no necessity whatever beyond the gratification of their own wicked instincts.

The Grand Duchess Alexandra and her sister-in-law, the Crown Princess Cecile, have shown themselves most violent in the feelings of hatred which they have exhibited toward the enemies of their adopted countries.

As for the third daughter of the Duke of Cumberland, the Princess Olga, she is still unmarried, although she is now thirty. Her sole reason for refusing many brilliant offers is that she does not care to leave her mother alone, and prefers her position as the spoilt

PRINCESS FREDERICA OF HANOVER

daughter of fond parents to a gamble in the marriage market. It is rumoured that she and her father are the only recalcitrant members of the Cumberland family who refuse to bow down before the grandeur of Prussia.

The Duke of Cumberland has one sister, the accomplished and charming Princess Frederica of Hanover, whose marriage was quite a romance. She was one of the first of the German Royal princesses to wed a commoner. She became betrothed to the Baron de Pawel-Rammigen, a fact which created a terrible scandal when first it became known to her family. Her brother was particularly excited, and it is even probable that she would never have been able to carry her wishes through had it not been for Queen Victoria, who, ever kind in regard to her relatives, came to her help. She supported the Princess, who was a favourite of hers, and allowed her to get married at Windsor, even consenting to grace the ceremony by her presence. Rumour added that the Queen contributed in a most generous manner to the welfare of the Princess Frederica, in order to make up for what the Duke of Cumberland refused to give to his sister, to whom he granted a dowry which was quite insufficient for her to live upon. The Princess Frederica lives for most of the year at Biarritz, where she has built for herself a lovely villa, and where she has made herself most popular. Her marriage has turned out very happily, and she has never had occasion to repent the choice she made, nor to regret the energy she displayed in resisting all opposition to it.

CHAPTER III

THE ROMANOFFS

IN Royal circles it is well known that Russian grand dukes and grand duchesses are always considered as the most eligible parties in the Royal marriage markets of Europe. There was not one German sovereign who did not look longingly toward Petersburg when thinking about the future of his children. Until the wedding of the late Tsar with the Princess Dagmar of Denmark, it had been a tradition at the Court of the Romanoffs that they had to seek their wives in Germany, where princesses were supposed to be ready at any moment to change their religion, whenever there was an advantageous match in prospect.

At the beginning of, and indeed all through, the last century, down to the death of the old Emperor William I., there had existed a very close intimacy between the Hohenzollerns and the Russian Imperial Family, and the influence of the Prussian House was a considerable factor in the marriages of the Romanoffs. When, however, the question arose of the marriage of the heir to the Russian Throne, political reasons existed which prevented him from asking the opinion of his uncle in Berlin, and it was decided to allow the young Grand Duke, by travel, to find out for himself whether he

A LOVE PILGRIMAGE

could meet with a princess whom he would think beautiful enough, and clever enough, to be worthy of becoming the Tsarina.

The Tsarevitch was the Grand Duke Nicholas Alexandrovitch, that handsome and clever man, who was to die so prematurely, and to leave behind him the reputation of having been one of the most accomplished men of his generation. He had been brought up with the utmost care by a fond mother, who loved him so intensely that she was heard to say that in taking him away from her God had punished her for having preferred him to her other children. Apart from the Grand Duke's unique position, his personality was bound to appeal to the heart of every young girl with whom he came in contact. Morally, intellectually, and physically he was one of the most attractive personages imaginable, and it is little wonder that the hopes of the whole of Europe, from the matrimonial point of view, were centred in him, and that speculations as to who would be the lucky one to win him were rife at every Court that could boast a princess old enough to aspire to the honour of becoming his consort.

The Grand Duke Nicholas stayed for a considerable length of time at Stuttgart, on a visit to his aunt, the Queen of Würtemberg, who before her marriage was the Grand Duchess Olga Nicolaievna of Russia, and the sister of Alexander II. Whilst there he had opportunity to meet a good many girls whose birth allowed them to hope that he might find among them one nice enough to please him. The Queen herself,

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though she had remained very Russian in her tastes and sympathies, had nevertheless felt the influence of the people among whom she lived, and she also cherished the desire that her nephew should take to himself a German bride. It is impossible to say what might have happened had not Fate brought the Grand Duke into the presence of the lovely Princess Dagmar of Denmark, whose eldest sister had just about that time become engaged to the then Prince of Wales. The reputation of the Princess Dagmar for loveliness, charm of manner, sweetness of disposition, and other qualities had already travelled far and wide all over Europe. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that from the first moment he met her the Grand Duke fell in love, and it was not long before the world heard that Russia was to have a Danish princess as its future Empress.

Berlin did not like it. The Emperor William I.—then still King William—went so far as to remonstrate with his nephew the Tsar, and to point out to him the disadvantages that in his eyes at least such a marriage presented, the principal of which was that the Danish Royal Family was supposed to harbour most anti-Prussian feelings, and that it might happen that the influence of the Princess Dagmar would be directed against Prussia in particular, and the interests of Germany in general. All his arguments, however, proved of no avail, and neither the Tsar nor his son allowed themselves to be persuaded as to the disadvantages of a union which was entirely one of affection, because the Grand Duke and his bride were

PRINCESS DAGMAR'S GRIEF

as much in love with each other as it was possible to be. A date for the wedding was fixed, and the Princess began to take lessons in the Russian language, and also to be instructed into the intricacies of the Greek faith by the confessor of the Empress, Father Bajanoff; when suddenly the Grand Duke, who for the last eighteen months or so had been ailing, became dangerously ill, and soon the doctors pronounced his condition to be entirely beyond any remedies that science could suggest.

A few short months passed away, and with it the useful and beloved life of the heir to the great Tsar. On his deathbed the Grand Duke Nicholas put the trembling hand of his weeping fiancée into that of his brother, and begged her to marry him for his sake, adding that Alexander was the only being upon earth to whom he would have consented to surrender that cherished being. After some months had gone by, and the Princess Dagmar's first grief had lost something of its intensity, she consented to accept her new destiny, and one day in September saw her make her solemn and official entry into the Russian capital as the future wife of the heir to the Crown of the Romanoffs.

It is not for me here to say what her marriage has been, nor all the blessings which it brought to her husband and to the Imperial Family, as well as to the whole of the vast Russian Empire over which she was to reign for such a short time. No consort of a sovereign has ever been more popular. She brought into the Court over which she presided an atmosphere of purity, of moral beauty, which made

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it absolutely different from any other in Europe. And she succeeded in shaking the German influence which up to her time had prevailed at Petersburg, and to demonstrate to her husband that Russia was great enough and big enough to be able to develop itself by its own strength and its own resources without being obliged to seek her inspirations in Berlin. She disliked the Hohenzollerns, and made no secret of this feeling ; and it was said at the time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 that, had it depended upon her, France would not have been crushed so completely as was the case, but that Russian interference would have put a stop to Hohenzollern cupidity. This slender, delicate woman had more political sagacity than many of the ministers of her father-in-law, and, married as she was to a man of strong character and great common sense, it is no wonder that during their reign Russia reached a foremost position, and after the retirement of Prince Bismarck from the sphere of active politics, became the paramount Continental power. The marriage of Alexander III. with the Princess Dagmar not only sounded the knell of German influence in Russia ; it also laid the seeds of the present Anglo-Russian understanding, which, owing to the circumstance that the consort of King Edward VII. of Great Britain and Ireland was the sister of the Empress of Russia, and that a close intimacy united these two Royal ladies, became in time an accomplished fact, a thing that no statesman would ever have believed possible after the Crimean War. It is very much to be doubted whether, under different circumstances, such an alliance

RUSSIA SHAKES OFF GERMANY

could have been concluded, as the misunderstandings and prejudices which existed between the two nations were of too deep a nature to be so easily removed.

France also found a warm friend in the consort of Alexander III., whose subtle mind and keen intelligence knew how to appreciate the many beautiful traits in the French character. She was an admirer of serious French literature, such as Taine and other historians wrote, and she kept herself wonderfully well informed as to the progress of French science. Empress Marie hated hypocrisy, and instinctively knew whenever it manifested itself; she therefore applied herself with all the energy which she possessed to lead Russia along a path entirely different from the one pursued by Germany.

Despite the pronounced views of the Empress, Russian grand dukes went on marrying German princesses, though it must be said to their honour the princesses did not seek to make German influence prevail at Petersburg. But when arose the question of finding a suitable wife for the eldest son and heir of Alexander III. and Marie Feodorovna, one had perforce to be sought for in Germany, as there was none eligible anywhere else. The eldest daughter of the King and Queen of Greece had married the Grand Duke Paul of Russia, and the second daughter was already engaged to the Grand Duke George; whilst the fact that British law objected to an English Royal princess changing her religion, and furthermore, the near relationship which existed between the children of the then Prince and Princess of Wales with those

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of Alexander III. rendered out of the question any union in that direction. Catholic princesses were also considered impossible; though at one time there was much talk about the likelihood of a match between the Grand Duke Tsarevitch and the second daughter of the Comte de Paris, the lovely Princess Hélène of Orleans, *The Times* even announcing it one day as an accomplished fact. That marriage, had it ever taken place, would undoubtedly have been an event of uncommon magnitude; and there were many politicians in France who tried by every means in their power to bring it about. But at the last moment the influence of the Jesuits prevailed, and the Princess absolutely refused to adopt the Greek faith, which was an essential condition to her marriage. The Emperor William II. then came forward again, and caused the Russian Court to be sounded in a diplomatic manner as to the possibility of his youngest sister being chosen as a bride for the Tsarevitch. Already a Prussian princess had worn the Crown of All the Russias, for the consort of Nicholas I. was the sister of the old Emperor William I. Princess Margaret, the favourite daughter of the Empress Frederick, was undoubtedly possessed with many brilliant qualities, and it was said that when the young Grand Duke saw her, he had been very much attracted by her charming manners and pleasant conversation; whether this is true or not, no one has ever been able find out. When the idea was submitted to the Empress Marie, she protested against it most energetically, and declared that on no account would she consent to an

A POSSIBLE BRIDE

alliance which would create a close family relationship between the Imperial House and the domineering monarch who ruled over the destinies of the German Empire.

At this juncture it was remembered that the popular consort of the Grand Duke Sergius, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna, had a sister, who might fulfil the necessary conditions which were considered indispensable in a bride for the heir to the Russian Throne.

Princess Alix of Hesse possessed one advantage that was, at that period, esteemed considerable by Russian higher circles of society: she was the granddaughter of Queen Victoria, with whom she spent much of her time. She was credited with English tastes, an English love for her home, and English common sense. She had been in Petersburg a few years before, on a visit to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and though quite young at the time, and not by any means the exquisitely beautiful woman she was to become, she had charmed all those whom she met by the quiet dignity of her manners and the modesty of her attitude. The Empress had taken to her at once, and when she was consulted as to the possibility of the Princess Alix becoming her daughter-in-law, she had caught at the idea eagerly. When, therefore, the Grand Duke Nicholas Alexandrovitch was sent to Coburg to attend the nuptials of his cousin, the Princess Victoria Melita of Saxe-Coburg, with the Grand Duke of Hesse, it was with the Emperor's permission to ask for the hand of the latter's sister, should his impression of her be as favour-

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able as it had been when he had seen her for the first time. During the few days which the Grand Duke Nicholas spent at Coburg, he became warmly attached to the fair-haired girl whom he remembered as hardly more than a child, and who now had developed into the dazzling beauty of womanhood. He did not hesitate long, and on the very day of the marriage of the Duchess of Coburg's daughter, the engagement of the Tsarevitch with the Princess Alix of Hesse was publicly announced. It was intended at the time to make the wedding the occasion of considerable festivities, and to celebrate it during the winter season in Petersburg, when the health of Alexander III., which had long been indifferent, suddenly took a turn for the worse, and he died at Livadia without having had the joy of seeing his son and heir happily married.

The Princess Alix, who thus was to occupy at once what perhaps was the most brilliant and at the same time the most responsible position in Europe, was married solemnly but quite simply, in the chapel of the Winter Palace a few days after Alexander III. had been laid in his grave in the fortress where Russian Tsars are buried, and the young Empress entered upon her new existence, accompanied by the good wishes of her millions of subjects. In spite of the many trials which crowded upon her during the years which followed upon it, her marriage has proved to be a very happy one. The Emperor and she are tenderly attached to each other, and no mother could be fonder of her children than the Empress Alexandra, whose whole life is centred in her husband and the four

ROYAL SISTERS OF MERCY

daughters and only son with whom they have been blessed.

The pleasures of Society had no attraction for the young Empress; under her sway the Court was no longer the scene of the many festivities which the Empress Marie liked to give. Still, the Court lost none of its dignity, nor was diminished the splendour which made it the most wonderful Court in Europe. The Imperial family were in the habit, for years, of spending a great part of the year in the Crimea, principally on account of the health of the little heir to the throne, which continued delicate, and also because the young Grand Duchesses were so fond of an outdoor life. The Empress, moreover, held the opinion that it does not do to introduce children too soon to scenes of excitement and of grandeur, with their tendency to give them an over-exalted idea of their own importance. She reared her daughters with tender care, and taught them to remember that the more exalted was their own position the more it entailed upon them the obligation to think about others.

This wise education has borne its fruits, and ever since the war broke out the daughters of the Tsar have each given a bright example to Russian society by the activity which they have displayed in the relief of suffering. The two elder girls, the Grand Duchesses Olga and Tatiana, organised committees of relief, in which they worked with indefatigable devotion and with an energy the more surprising because no one suspected that young girls of their age could possibly enter comprehendingly into the details connected with

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such a work. Apart from this, they regularly attended the hospital which their mother has opened at the Imperial residence of Tsarskoye Selo, and where she herself has fulfilled the duties of a sister of charity with a touching spirit of self-sacrifice.

Of course, it was to be expected that as soon as the Tsar's daughters attained a marriageable age suitors in plenty would come forward. Indeed, gossip has already been very busy with their names, and when, just before the war broke out, the King of Saxony went to pay a visit to the Court of Petersburg, certain ignorant people declared that it was his intention to propose himself as a husband for Olga Nicolaievna. It was forgotten that a Queen of Saxony must belong to the Roman Catholic faith, notwithstanding the fact that the people over whom she reigns are mostly Protestants; and when the Roumanian Royal Family visited Tsarskoye Selo during the summer of 1914 there were bets going on in fashionable circles of Petersburg as to whether the son of the Crown Prince would become engaged to the elder or to the younger of the two Grand Duchesses named.

However, no announcement followed upon this journey, which from another point of view was more memorable than the world knew, because it laid the foundation of a permanent understanding between Roumania and Russia. A few weeks later the Tsar, accompanied by the Empress and by his daughters, visited the King and Queen of Roumania at Constanza, and it was verbally arranged that Prince Carol, the

RUSSIA AND THE BALKANS

eldest son of the Crown Prince, would pay another visit to Petersburg during the winter of 1914.

The war broke out, and all these plans came to nothing ; but when peace is once more restored to the world it is probable that the subject of a Roumanian marriage for one of the Tsar's daughters will be revived. A good many reasons speak in favour of such an event. The future Sovereign of Roumania, Prince Carol, belongs to the Greek Orthodox faith ; he rules over a Slav population, which has long aspired to a closer union with Russia, that would make the marriage immensely popular all over the country.

The advent of a Russian Crown Princess would be received with enthusiasm and further consolidate a dynasty which is loved by the people, because the present Queen, by birth an English princess, is also a grandchild of the late Emperor Alexander II., and consequently has Russian blood in her veins. From a political point of view, considering the ambitions of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria in regard to the Balkans, it would have an immense political importance, for the independence of Roumania would thus remain assured by the certainty of the protection of Russia.

Speculation has been very active in suggesting which of the two—the Grand Duchess Olga or the Grand Duchess Tatiana—would consent to accept the diadem. It seems, however, from all that one hears, that it is the Grand Duchess Tatiana whose sympathies have been captured, and who also has made the greater appeal to the feelings of Prince Carol. Her elder sister, the Grand Duchess Olga, declared when still quite

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a child that no consideration whatever would induce her to leave Russia. But time will tell. It was said at one time that both the Emperor and the Empress would have liked her to become the wife of the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovitch, the only son of the Grand Duke Paul and of his first wife, the lovely Princess Alexandra of Greece; but lately it has been whispered that the idea had been abandoned and that probabilities point to one of the sons of the Grand Duke Constantine as a prospective son-in-law of the Tsar. It would not be an impossible thing, by any means, especially if one takes into consideration the very few bridegrooms who will be eligible in Europe after the war.

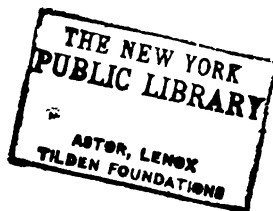
Perhaps this feeling has been strengthened lately owing to the very happy marriages made by the two sisters of the Tsar, the Grand Duchesses Xenia and Olga, who have both wedded distant cousins, and who live in great state in Petrograd, where they are sincerely liked in all classes of society.

To tell the truth a foreign marriage, with any other than a prince belonging to the Greek faith, for the eldest daughter of the Emperor Nicholas, would be most unpopular at the present day in Russia, unless it were with a personage whose choice is looked forward to most eagerly all over Europe, and whose entry into the Imperial family would be hailed with the wildest bursts of enthusiasm all over the Empire of the Romanoffs: I mean the Prince of Wales.

In mentioning this name, I am giving shape to an unexpressed hope of all the intelligent classes of



THE ROYAL FAMILY OF RUSSIA



A PROPHETIC MINISTER

Russian society, who, if they were asked to give their opinion, would say without hesitation that such a union would serve the best interests of both nations, and that it would mean the best possible guarantee for the peace of the world. To see a Russian princess raised to the throne of Great Britain would not only flatter the Russian people, it would also consolidate the friendship which is being cemented by the blood spilt in common on so many battlefields. In order to achieve this result, even the religious question would take a secondary place, and Holy Russia would look through her fingers if one of the daughters of its Tsar would consent to embrace the Anglican faith after her marriage to the heir to the English Crown.

There was also another suitor who, if rumour is correct, would have given much to stand a chance of being accepted by this desirable Grand Duchess. It was Prince Alexander of Servia. He also visited Petersburg, but failed to make an impression. However, he was wise enough to observe that he stood no chance, and to retire before exposing himself to a refusal.

It was reported at the time that wise M. Pashitch, the Servian Prime Minister, who accompanied him, consoled him with the comment that nothing was lost, because after all the Tsar had four daughters, and that the younger ones might look upon things with different eyes than their elders had done. It might easily be that the experienced old statesman was prophetic in making such a remark, because it is

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certain that the heroic conduct of the Crown Prince of Servia during the whole campaign is well capable of impressing young and ardent minds, and will dispose them to look upon him with feelings of admiration, that may easily develop into warmer sentiments.

The daughters of the Emperor Nicholas are perhaps the greatest matches in Europe at the present moment, if one takes into consideration the immense fortunes which they will bring to their husbands, in addition to their position, personal charm, and prestige.

But in the Royal marriage market they count but little in comparison with their brother, the little Grand Duke Alexis, about whose future wife people are talking already, notwithstanding the fact that he is but eleven years old and in very delicate health. Upon him rest the hopes of Holy Russia, and for him she prays every day in her numerous churches and shrines. He is a precocious, most intelligent child, the idolised son of fond parents, who for ten years waited in vain for the birth of a longed-for heir. Handsome, bright, clever, and wilful, he is, because of his physical weakness, the object of the most tender solicitude on the part of his father and mother, and it is probable that the Empress Alexandra is already wondering who will be lucky enough to win him for a husband when the time comes for him to look about for a bride. That he will marry young is certain, because, being an only son, it is most essential that the succession to the Throne should be assured in the direct line. It is but natural, therefore, that even so early this important question

LOOKING AHEAD

should be discussed both in private and in official circles. Russia would decidedly object to a German princess, even if it were likely the Romanoffs would turn their thoughts that way. A Spanish Infanta is out of the question. There remains, therefore, few others. The little Princess Ingrid, the daughter of the Crown Prince and Princess of Sweden, is one. She is about five years old at present. Or maybe one of her cousins, the daughters of Prince Charles and of Princess Ingeborg, may be chosen. It must be remembered that the Princess Ingeborg belongs to the reigning house of Denmark, and that Court has still much to say in Russian Court circles, and will have so long as the Dowager Empress lives. Perhaps the eyes of Nicholas II. may turn toward one of the little Greek princesses, of whom there are plenty, and who, through their Russian relationship, offer considerable advantages. There are nine of them, two daughters of the King, and their cousins, the children of Prince Nicolas and of Prince Andrew, all of whom promise to inherit the good looks of their respective mothers.

Failing the little Tsarevitch, the Crown would revert to the Grand Duke Cyril, the eldest son of the Grand Duchess Vladimir, that ambitious and clever princess, who has made for herself such an exclusive position at the Russian Court. He married under romantic circumstances his cousin, the divorced Grand Duchess of Hesse, and was for some time in disgrace for having done so, until his father, who was still alive, went to the Tsar, and, it is said, spoke so strongly to him about

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what he considered was an injustice, that he got the Grand Duke Cyril restored to Imperial favour, and even allowed to return to Russia. He is a very handsome man, but ever since the terrible accident of the *Petropavlosk*, when he was blown up with the ship, together with Admiral Makaroff, during the Japanese War, and only escaped by a miracle, he has been in very poor health. He has two daughters, but no son. His wife is a beautiful and amiable woman, whose name, Victoria, sounds strangely to Russian ears; indeed, it was only after her conversion to the Greek faith that she was allowed, by special permission of the Emperor, to use that name. The Emperor told her that he liked the name, because it reminded him of Queen Victoria, who had been so good and so kind to him when he had visited her, first when engaged to her granddaughter, and later on, when he had paid his respects to her, after his accession to the throne. The Grand Duchess Victoria has made herself liked among Russians, and she is perhaps the one most seen in Society, of which she is very fond. Lately she has also come forward as an active worker in the Red Cross, and she has more than once travelled with a hospital train to and from the frontier, bringing wounded soldiers to Petrograd, as the Russian capital is called to-day.

There is a curious story related about the Grand Duchess Victoria. On the day when the *Petropavlosk* went down with its load of brave men she was staying with her mother, the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, and she came down to breakfast with a pale and

A FATEFUL VISION

anxious face, which bore but too evident traces of tears. When asked what was the matter she related blushingly and timidly that she had had a terrible vision, and had seen her cousin Cyril—whom at that time she had not yet married—wrestling in the ocean and drowned in its cold waves. Her mother laughed at her, and told her that she must not be superstitious ; but the Princess was so troubled and so terrified, that she forthwith sent a telegram to the Grand Duchess Vladimir, asking her for news. A few hours later she learned that the Grand Duke had gone down with the fated ship and had only been saved by a miracle. Already at that time she was supposed to be deeply attached to this favourite cousin of hers, and after the war they were married very quietly at Tegernsee, near Munich, in the presence of the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, the mother of the Princess.

The Grand Duchess Vladimir has two other sons, the Grand Dukes Boris and Andrew. The former is a dashing young man, very much liked by the Emperor, and most popular in Petrograd society. He is still a bachelor, much to the despair of many a fair lady, and has more than once been heard to declare that he did not intend marrying for a considerable number of years. The secret wish of his mother would be to see him married to the second daughter of the Princess Royal of England, the Princess Maud of Fife ; but whether this will ever happen I am not in a position to say. As for the Grand Duke Andrew, he is supposed to be consumptive, and spends his winters at

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St. Moritz, where he takes a keen interest in winter sports.

When talking about the eligible brides of the Russian Imperial Family I have not mentioned yet the young Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna, who was married to Prince William of Sweden, and who divorced him in the early part of 1914. She has returned to Petrograd and delights in being in her native country once more. She never got used to the snows and the dullness of Stockholm, which she intensely disliked, even though Society adored her, and speaks to this day of her charming manners, forgetting the undoubted extravagances in which she indulged, and attributing them to her youth and inexperience. The fact is, that she was but a child, who had been brought up far too strictly by her aunt, the Grand Duchess Elisabeth, and who, when she found herself free to do what she liked, abused the permission, and amused herself with an energy which at last brought about a separation, and later on a divorce, in which neither was to blame, and which proceeded entirely from incompatibility of temper.

When she returned home there were some rumours that she intended to marry again, but so far nothing more has been heard of it. When the war broke out the Grand Duchess was one of the first to enrol under the banner of the Red Cross, in connection with which she is working so devotedly.

It seems that when she returned to Petersburg, the Dowager Empress thought it her duty to speak seriously to her, and to tell her that she ought to think

GRAND DUCHESS MARIE PAVLOVNA

twice before divorce, as it was always a very grave step for a woman to take, especially in her position ; no woman, said the Empress, should allow the world to talk about her. Marie Pavlovna, upon this, retorted that she thought it more honest to divorce than to go on playing a part and breaking faith with the man to whom she had plighted herself. The Empress was aghast, and did not renew the conversation. She said afterwards that for once in her life she had not been able to find a reply to this child who so openly said what, after all, was a truth which others perhaps would do as well to take to heart.

Apart from her divorce, the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna is a great match from the worldly point of view, and if ever she married again, the man who would be lucky enough to win her would not make a bad bargain. She is pretty, extremely bright and clever, and, besides, very rich, having, apart from her dowry, inherited a considerable fortune from her great-grandmother, the Grand Duchess Alexandra of Russia, with whom she was a favourite. She is one of the most attractive, as well as one of the most popular, members of the Imperial family.

Lately, Petrograd has gossipped freely about the morganatic marriage of Princess Tatiana, the daughter of the Grand Duke Constantine, with a simple commoner, Prince Bagration Moukhranski, a pleasant man and the descendant of an old Caucasian family, but poor and without any status whatever. She lives quite like a private person, and is never so annoyed as when one makes any fuss about her rank, which she

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renounced without regret. Her cousin, the Princess Irene of Russia, also wedded a man not belonging to a reigning house, but the heir to what is perhaps the largest fortune in Russia—Prince Youssoupoff, the only son of that amiable Princess Youssoupoff, who is reputed to have brought many millions as a dowry when she became the wife of Count Soumarokoff Elston, an officer in a regiment of the Guards. The Count obtained from the Emperor the right to take his wife's name and title. It is an open secret that the Princess Youssoupoff had been sought in marriage by Prince Alexander of Battenberg when he was elected Prince of Bulgaria. These were the first examples of members of the Russian Imperial Family wedding anyone not their equal in rank—at least, the first in the feminine line—but it is likely to be followed by others, and the Emperor is generally approved for not allowing questions of etiquette to interfere with the affections of his young relatives. The Tsar's kindness is too great for him to put obstacles in the way of true affection, and this is perhaps one of the reasons why he is so deeply loved in his own family circle.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAST OF THE NASSAUS

FEW Royal marriages have excited so much interest, or have caused so much anxiety to European diplomacy as the one which the last descendant in direct line of William the Silent, Prince of Orange, and first Stadtholder of the Netherlands, contracted with a youngest son of the Ducal family of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. It gave many a sleepless night to Prince Bismarck, who had had his eye on the Netherlands ever since the death of the sons of old King William III. caused people to think that the House of Nassau was doomed to extinction. Some persons, indeed, believed that the cessation of the male line imperilled the independence of the country over which the Nassaus had reigned for nearly five hundred years.

The German Chancellor viewed with deep chagrin the possibility of that rich inheritance passing to a collateral feminine line, as represented by the Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar or the Princess of Wied.

Bismarck certainly aimed to have the Netherlands under German influence, but would not have welcomed the Duke of Weimar having control of Dutch affairs. Such a consummation would have extinguished for ever Bismarck's ambition to get a grip upon Holland, because

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the independent nature of the Dutch people would keep the Duke strictly to the interests of the Netherlands. Another factor in Bismarck's objection was that should it have come about that the Royal line passed to the Saxe-Weimars—who were but a secondary German Royal House—they would thus have secured control of a large army not under Prussian influence—a dangerous eventuality. Bismarck knew very well that neither he, nor the Emperor William, nor Prussia in general, were favourites in the South of Germany, and this caused him to fear that if the rebellious spirits there, who were trying to preach independence from the Prussian yoke, found themselves in possession of the resources which the control of a state like Holland would place within their reach, they might turn round and refuse to remain in a position of dependence upon Prussia, a country which they cordially detested.

Bismarck had several times tried to arrange a marriage for the Prince of Orange, the eldest son and heir of King William III. of the Netherlands, with a German princess. For a short time, indeed, there was the expectation that the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna of Russia, who later on became the wife of the Duke of Edinburgh, would become Queen of Holland. When the Prince of Orange died, Bismarck did his best to persuade Prince Alexander, the late heir's brother, to take unto himself a consort, notwithstanding the fact that he was infirm and a cripple; but the young man had the good taste to see that the woman who would marry him would only do so on account of his position and large fortune, and he

PRINCE BISMARCK'S ANXIETY

declined all the overtures which were made to him from Berlin. When he died the anxiety of the German Chancellor was intensified, and he made at least one more attempt to ensure the succession of the Dutch throne to the House of Nassau.

The King had one brother, Prince Henry, a childless widower, who was not far from his sixtieth year, extremely wealthy, and, though very withered in appearance, still a pleasant man, with excellent and genuine qualities of heart and mind. Prince Bismarck bethought himself that it might be possible to induce him to marry again, and he contrived that a meeting should take place between him and Princess Marie, the eldest daughter of Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, the famous Red Prince, who had just attained her twenty-third year, and who was beautiful, amiable, and charming in every way, but not happy at home, where her father and mother were scarcely on speaking terms, and whose dowry, like those of all the Prussian princesses, was extremely small. Prince Henry allowed himself to be persuaded, of course, proposed to the Princess Marie, and was accepted. The marriage took place in August, 1878, at Potsdam, and was graced by the presence of the King himself, who, though hating his brother as he did all the members of his family, thought it nevertheless incumbent on him to come to Germany for the occasion.

King William III., if not exactly the brute some persons have represented him to be, still was not of an attractive manner. His temper was abominable, and he had made his first wife, the accomplished Queen

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Sophy of Württemberg, far from a model husband. He was selfish, too ; and at the same time nourished feelings which made him look with rage at any attempt of other people to be happy or satisfied. When he saw the lovely bride whom his brother was leading to the altar, and realised that probably the union might be blessed with children, who would ultimately step into his shoes, the idea was intolerable to him, and he forthwith decided that he would take measures to prevent such an unwished-for contingency.

It was remarked during the wedding festivities that he scarcely addressed a word to his new sister-in-law, and treated her with the scantest courtesy. When he took his leave, after a stay of two days at the German Court, everybody was genuinely delighted to see him go away. Not unnaturally, after such an experience the Princess Marie could not hide her anxiety at the prospect of having to meet him again at The Hague.

It was not, however, to his own country that the aged King returned when he left Potsdam. He bent his steps toward the little town of Arolsen, in the south of Germany, under the pretext of paying a visit to one of his distant cousins who resided there, the reigning Prince of Waldeck and Pyrmont. Prince George Victor had four daughters, of whom the eldest, Princess Pauline, was married to Prince Alexis de Bentheim at Steinfurt, whilst the three others were of a marriageable age. The King remained a week at Arolsen, and before he left announced to his family and to foreign Courts that he was engaged to the Princess Emma of Waldeck and Pyrmont.

AN UNDESERVED FATE

The future Queen of Holland was at that time twenty years of age. She had never been pretty ; but was endowed with many qualities, amongst which a sunny, sweet temper and a remarkable patience were the foremost. She had been carefully brought up, and trained to a strict obedience to the will of her father, which she did not attempt to dispute when he signified to her that she was to make a most brilliant match in marrying into the old dynasty of the Orange Nassaus. He did not add that she was going to be united to a brutal, selfish old man, with an unbearable character and temper, who was bound to make her miserable. The Princess Emma submitted, and meekly went to meet a fate which most certainly she did not deserve.

The King was delighted. Prince Bismarck was more than satisfied ; it would be hard indeed, he thought, if both these marriages should remain childless, and what he desired was the birth of an heir to the Crown of Holland.

The wedding of the King took place at Arolsen on January 7th, 1879. It was solemnised in a most quiet manner, and none of his relations was invited to attend it, not even his sister, the Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, or his brother, Prince Henry, with his young wife. The newly-married pair started at once for the castle of Het Loo in the Province of Gueldres, and the new existence of Queen Emma began in real earnest.

Its first days were saddened by family mourning. Prince Henry caught cold about the time of his

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brother's marriage, and it developed into a sharp attack of measles which carried him to the grave in a few days. His three-months' bride was left a widow, and under the most distressing circumstances from the material point of view. Prince Henry had worshipped his young wife, and had openly declared to his friends that he had made a will in which everything that he possessed was left to her. But after his death no such will was found, though a good many people declared that they had seen it, and dark rumours went about concerning the share that the King was supposed to have had in its disappearance. William III. was the one who profited by the fact that the will was missing, because his brother having died intestate, all his vast estates, his millions, his jewels and pictures passed to him, and the Princess Henry was left with the slightest of dowries, which barely allowed her to exist as befitted her rank. It was reported that remonstrances were made to the King, and that he was told he ought at least to allow his sister-in-law to continue her residence at the castle of Soesdyk, where her husband had taken her after their marriage, but he brutally replied that the place belonged henceforward to him, and that she had better find another home as soon as possible. The Princess, who did not care to return to Germany, resigned herself to her fate, and settled in a small house at The Hague, where she lived in complete retirement, until the death of the King, when his widow, the Queen Regent, came to her help most generously ; she not only settled a large income upon her, but gave her for her residence

AN HEIR IS BORN

one of the numerous castles which the Crown possesses in the neighbourhood of The Hague.

In thus coming forward to repair a cruel injustice, Queen Emma showed the noble disposition with which she had always been credited by all those who had known her before her marriage with the old King, whom her father's ambition had obliged her to wed, and who did his best to render her life about as bitter as it was possible for a man to make it. She bore with him, humoured him, was kind to him ; submitted to his caprices and vagaries ; and resigned herself to be continually bullied, ill-treated, and snubbed. And she fulfilled all the expectations which her marriage had raised all over Holland ; she gave birth to a daughter about one year after her wedding-day.

The arrival in the world of this little girl was the cause of the wildest joy throughout the Netherlands, which had already given up the thought of a direct heir to the ancient House of the Nassaus. The Queen found herself intensely popular, and whenever she showed herself in the streets was cheered with extreme enthusiasm. This exasperated the King, who made her pay dearly for the love which her subjects bore her. He interfered with her in every way, thwarted her in all her desires, even the simplest ones ; and made her feel at every step and turn that he was the master of the house, and that she had better not attempt to assert herself in any way, or else he would very quickly dispatch her back to Arolsen, keeping his daughter with him, and never allowing her to see her mother again.

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This was the one eventuality to which Queen Emma refused to submit, and out of love for the child whom she did not wish to abandon to the care of a father who would never know how to bring her up, she bore the insults which were her daily portion. At last the King died. Queen Emma wore mourning for him with all the rigour which State ceremonial imposes, and even went every day to pray over his coffin in the Royal vault at Delft. Wicked people declared that she did so only to convince herself that he really was dead.

Queen Emma was a most sensible woman, with abundant common sense, and she very quickly discerned the peculiarities of the nation over which she was called upon to rule in the name of her only daughter. She, therefore, made an exceedingly judicious Regent.

To her daughter she gave an admirable education, training her for her duties with the most tender care, and teaching her how to govern her country with justice and ability. She was sincerely liked in Holland, and upon her widowhood that affection with which she had previously inspired the Dutch people increased as one saw what a good, devoted mother and Regent she was, and how entirely she gave everything up for the sake of the young Queen who had stepped as a child of ten upon the throne of her glorious ancestors.

Little Wilhelmina had inherited something of her father's tyrannical disposition, and she was but too inclined to let others feel that she was the Queen, and that she intended to be obeyed. Her mother corrected this natural disposition and appealed to the girl's heart, and to her common sense, teaching her that

WILHELMINA OF ORANGE NASSAU

her high position entailed on her many more duties than would have been the case had she been born in a lower and less responsible sphere. Her efforts were crowned with success, and Wilhelmina grew up a conscientious, good, honest, scrupulous woman, admirably trained for all the difficulties of her future existence as a reigning Sovereign.

Wilhelmina of Orange Nassau was clever, and knew very well how to accept the lessons of her fond mother. She was proud of her position as a Queen ; proud of the nation over which she ruled ; proud of the blood that ran in her veins ; proud of everything that belonged to her. And she wanted to win the heart of her subjects ; to make them feel that their interests would be safe in her hands. When she came of age, and had to take the oath to the Constitution in the cathedral of Amsterdam, her ministers had prepared a speech which she was to read for the occasion. The Queen asked it to be submitted to her a few days before, and, after having read it, tore up the paper upon which it was written. "This will never do," she said ; "I know what I am to say to my people—and it will be something quite different from this rubbish," she added disdainfully.

And on the day which saw her assume the reins of the government, the youthful Sovereign spoke a few, very few words indeed ; but they went direct to the heart of "her people," as she had called them, and by their simple earnestness excited the greatest enthusiasm to which cold-blooded Holland had ever given expression. The Dutch nation began to

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worship this girl who understood them so well, and who had found at once the way to appeal to their hearts and to their feelings. Wherever the Queen showed herself, she was received with cheers, and the little children even followed her in the streets as she went for her daily walks, quite simply and only attended by one lady-in-waiting. Very often those walks took her to the bedside of the poor, or where misery and poverty reigned. She showed herself in every action of her life a noble woman ; and she has continued to be so.

Her mother, Queen Emma, with all her great qualities, had remained extremely German at heart ; though justice must be rendered to her in recording the fact that she had never thought of the interests of Germany during the whole time of her responsible Regency. But when the question of a marriage for her daughter came to be discussed, she turned her eyes toward the land of her birth, and openly expressed the wish that her child might choose for herself a companion in life from one of the reigning houses of that country.

The Dutch people did not quite agree with her on this important point. They did not care for a German consort, and would have infinitely preferred that a Belgian or an English prince should win the heart of their young ruler. Queen Wilhelmina was kept so secluded, and had so very few opportunities for meeting anyone who might prove eligible for her to marry, that it soon became certain that she would have to follow the advice of her mother concerning her future

HOLLAND AND GERMANY

establishment. The Emperor William would have given much for her to have chosen one of his sons, and he did his best to persuade the Dowager Queen to use her influence in that direction. Indeed, at one moment it seemed as if this plan had some chance of success, but French diplomacy interfered, and the Dutch Ministry represented to the Queen Mother that such a marriage might have disastrous consequences for the future of the Netherlands. Moreover, it was certain that the majority of the nation was violently opposed to any such eventuality, as it feared that Holland might thereby run the danger of being drawn into any future quarrels which the German Empire might have with its neighbours. Besides, Prussian arrogance had already made itself felt in different matters connected with the foreign politics of Holland, and this was more than sufficient to inspire the country with a profound distrust for the tortuous intricacies of German politics.

Queen Emma had perforce to submit, which she did with better grace because her own common sense told her that those who foresaw that an alliance with the Hohenzollerns might be pregnant with disaster for Holland were not so very far wrong. But rather than give up her idea of a German marriage for her daughter, she looked about to discover what prince might prove acceptable to the Dutch people.

Perhaps Queen Wilhelmina's mother allowed William II. to guess something of what was going on in her mind ; perhaps also the German Emperor's numerous spies, of whom he had a considerable number in Holland,

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advised him as to the predilection of the former Regent. Whatever may have been the motive, the fact remains that he forthwith presented another candidate for her approval and choice. This candidate was a younger son of the late Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Prince Henry, a young man of indifferent reputation, who was on the point of emigrating somewhere out of reach of his creditors, when it was suggested to him from Berlin that he had better attempt to win the heart and affections of the young Queen of Holland. In consideration part of his numerous debts would be paid and he would be given the means to start his courtship in a manner befitting his rank and his position in the world.

Prince Henry, of course, jumped at the chance that was offered to him from Berlin. His former peccadilloes were carefully hidden from the knowledge of Queen Emma, who was only told that he would prove an obedient and submissive husband to his wife, and that, moreover, he would never attempt to mix himself up in matters of State or to interfere in the affairs of the country. A meeting was arranged by the Emperor William somewhere in a German watering-place, where Queen Emma pretended that she had to make a cure ; and thrown for the first time in her life in the company of a young man who did his best to make himself pleasant to her, Queen Wilhelmina grew to like him as a matter of course, and finally agreed to his proposal, being partly influenced by what she had been told, that he would never interfere with the government of her country.

GERMAN PLEASURE

Warm congratulations from all her German relatives were poured upon her when the news of her engagement was officially announced. Even the haughty Grand Duchess Vladimir of Russia, the sister of Prince Henry of Mecklenburg, deigned to write a most cordial letter to the future sister-in-law who was to retrieve the fallen fortunes of the youngest scion of her house, and to express to her in the warmest terms her joy at the unexpected piece of good luck that had fallen to the portion of her brother. The Emperor William telegraphed at once his approval, and wrote a separate letter to Prince Henry, in which he reminded him, amongst other things, that he was a German prince; and ought never to forget his duties toward his own country and the land of his birth.

The Queen of Holland was married with great solemnity at the cathedral of The Hague to Prince Henry of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and though the union which she contracted was not exactly a popular one, yet she was wished happiness in her new life by the whole of the Dutch people. The papers even made some delicate allusions to the fact that very probably the rejoicings of the nation on the occasion of the Queen's wedding would be followed in due time by others of more importance still : those to celebrate the birth and christening of an heir to the House of Orange Nassau. This last event, however, did not occur quite so soon as people had hoped and expected.

Prince Henry, who was awarded the rank and position of Prince Consort, and became naturalised in

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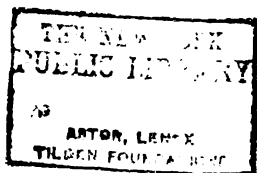
Holland, did not make himself liked there. His stiff German manners did not please the Dutch people, and very soon it became known that he had not renounced certain bad habits he had contracted in his own country. More than once Wilhelmina had to pay his debts, and it was said that painful scenes had taken place between husband and wife, and that Prince Henry had even ill-treated the Queen. True or not, these rumours went about among the public, and made him intensely disliked by the majority of the Queen's subjects. The latter, however, never made any sign that she objected to her husband's doings, and outwardly, at least, observed toward him both affectionate and dignified manners. It is not to be doubted that she came very soon to the conclusion that she had been wedded to a man inferior to her in everything, and that she could never be quite happy with him; but she had far too much pride to allow the public to penetrate into the secrets of her conjugal life. For a good many years her marriage remained a childless one, but at last the wishes of the nation were fulfilled, and one April morning a daughter saw the light of day in the Palace of The Hague, and the House of Orange hailed the birth of an heiress to its possessions and titles.

The arrival of this small child was the greatest joy that had ever been granted to Queen Wilhelmina, who saw in its advent in the world not only the continuation of her race, but also the greatest consolation of her life amid its arduous and ungrateful duties. She decided to bring up her daughter in the same



Photo: Deutmann

**QUEEN WILHELMINA OF HOLLAND, AND
PRINCESS JULIANA**



THE FUTURE OF HOLLAND

manner that she herself had been trained by her adoring mother ; simply and earnestly, with principles of strict obedience to the duties that were given to her to perform. Her relations with her husband thereafter also grew more tender ; and here it must be remarked that Prince Henry had succeeded, too, in winning at last the favour of the Dutch nation, thanks to his heroic behaviour when a German steamer, the *Elbe*, sank on the Dutch coast together with its load of emigrants and passengers. He was one of the first to rush to the rescue, and worked like the humblest of sailors at saving the wrecked people, giving to everybody the example of a quiet and determined courage which changed entirely the hostile feelings which had been nourished against him in Holland until that day, and won him the regard of those who had violently disliked him before.

The marriage of Queen Wilhelmina was the cause of much heart-burning in Europe, and it is likely that when the time comes to think about the establishment of her daughter the feeling will again recur. Little Princess Juliana is only six years old at present, and it is already a current rumour in Berlin that German diplomacy is determined to give her as husband one of the sons of the present Crown Prince. Such a marriage would bring Holland definitely into the sphere of German influence, and at the same time seal its fate. Whether this is likely to happen is, of course, impossible to say. For one thing, all these combinations may crumble to the ground, as it is possible after all that a son may be born to the present

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

Queen, an event that would at once dispose of the political importance of any marriage which the Princess Juliana might contract later on. It is also possible that the treaty of peace which will be concluded between the present belligerent powers at the end of the war will relegate Prussia to a relatively harmless position, where it will be a matter of utter indifference to the world whether or not one of her princes marries the heiress to the Dutch throne.

But after all is said and done, human calculations, always liable to be mistaken, are perfectly useless; it is quite impossible to guess what the future of Holland will be; she has as yet succeeded in preserving her neutrality, but what she may do in the future depends on circumstances no one can control or conjecture. One thing can be safely affirmed, there is a considerable party in the Netherlands which would like their country to interfere in favour of Belgium, and which is deeply irritated against Germany and her aggressive policy. This party fears that the independence of Holland is threatened by Germany, and that in the very remote and improbable contingency of Prussia emerging triumphant out of the ferocious struggle, she would hasten to incorporate Holland into the alliance which she has contracted with Austria, and thus ensure to herself an outlet on the North Sea, which, combined with the possession of Antwerp, would give her entire dominion on that coast, and allow her to withstand any attack to which she might be subjected on the part of the British fleet. It is most likely that the German sympathies

HOLLAND'S NEUTRALITY

of the Queen Mother and of her son-in-law have something to do with the neutrality to which the Dutch Government has pledged itself, a neutrality that, it must be owned, has shaken in some quarters the great popularity which Queen Wilhelmina has hitherto enjoyed, and caused her conduct to be criticised with a shade of sharpness. Holland does not care to become a German province, nor even to be tied down by an alliance to Germany; and this was partly one of the reasons why the marriage of its Sovereign gave rise to some discontent at the time when it was contracted.

It must be owned, however, if one wishes to be impartial, that the position of Holland and of its Government is an exceedingly difficult one, and that it will require all the resources of her diplomacy to enable her to overcome the numerous painful incidents which are sure to crop up with regard to her before the end of the war. If one takes all this into consideration, one must recognise that so far Queen Wilhelmina has held to a line of conduct which has been clever and impartial, and that her consort has not influenced her to the extent of becoming the humble servant of the German Emperor. On the contrary, he has encouraged her to show her independence by receiving with warmth the unfortunate Belgian refugees who have thronged into Holland. In that respect, Prince Henry has proved that though he is a German he has encouraged the Queen of the Netherlands in resisting the dictates of this arrogant and unscrupulous nation.

CHAPTER V

LUXEMBURG AND BELGIUM

AT the present moment there exists in the Royal marriage market one great heiress whose hand is coveted by almost every princely bachelor in Europe. It is the young Grand Duchess of Luxemburg, who not only succeeded her father on the throne of the Grand Duchy, but also inherited the greater part of his enormous fortune.

Marie Adelaide, Grand Duchess of Luxemburg and Duchess of Nassau, who has just reached her twenty-first year, assumed on her eighteenth birthday the reins of government in her little dominion, which up to then had been administered by her mother, an Infanta of Portugal, and the sister of the Archduchess Marie Thérèse of Austria. On her father's side she was related to the Royal House of Sweden, and also to that of Baden, her aunt, the Princess Hilda of Nassau, having married the Grand Duke of that name. She was the eldest of a family of six girls, the successive birth of whom had brought one disappointment on the top of the other to her parents, who ardently wished for a son and heir.

At first it was believed that difficulties would be thrown in the way of Marie Adelaide's accession to the

GRAND DUCHESS MARIE ADELAIDE

throne of Luxemburg, as the Count of Merenberg, the brother of the present Countess Torby, and the son of the late Prince Nicholas of Nassau by a morganatic marriage, contested the rights of his young cousin, and pretended that the feminine line was excluded from succession by virtue of an old family statute of the Nassau dynasty. His pretensions, however, were rejected by the courts of law whither he carried them, and, failing the male line, the rights of the eldest daughter of the Duke of Luxemburg were recognised, not only in the Grand Duchy, but also throughout Europe; and when her father died Marie Adelaide was acclaimed as Sovereign by the whole population of that State, which rather relished the idea of being governed by a young and pretty girl.

The Grand Duchess Marie Adelaide was the first member of the Nassau family to profess the Catholic religion since the great man of that race, William the Silent, had renounced the creed of his forefathers, and gone over to the cause of the Reformation. She is extremely beautiful, very talented, very intelligent, and, moreover, possessed of a strong will, which she never showed more bravely than when, alone in her motor-car, she met the German army which was invading her Grand Duchy and protested in person against the violation of its integrity and neutrality.

Besides the revenues of her small state, she was the sole mistress of a fortune of several millions, which, apart from every other advantage, made her the greatest heiress in Europe. From the day that she reached a marriageable age she became the *point de*

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

mire of the frequenters of the Royal marriage markets of the world, and the offers which she had were too numerous to be counted. So far, she has shown no inclination for matrimony; on the contrary, she has kept at bay all the suitors who crowded around her. Very independent of character, she is supposed to have declared that she did not see any necessity to sacrifice her liberty for the sake of a husband who might not, after all, prove worthy, and that if the Duchy of Luxemburg wanted heirs, she had five sisters who could marry and present it with one. Perhaps she felt that it would be difficult for her to choose a proper companion for her life amidst the competitors who, to her extreme annoyance, came forward every day.

This youthful sovereign had ideas and opinions of her own, and she did not share the admiration which her family displayed for German methods, German ways, and the German manner of governing; and though the Grand Ducal family of Baden, with whom her mother, the Dowager Duchess, was on very intimate terms, loaded her with attentions, she guessed that these were not wholly disinterested. She knew quite well, indeed, that they, together with other people in Germany, not excepting the Emperor himself, were very much interested in everything that concerned her existence, and would have liked her to marry a man in possession of their particular confidence and esteem.

Now, this did not at all agree with her own secret intentions. She did not care for a German suitor, imposed upon her by circumstances and other people's

A PURPOSEFUL PRINCESS

ambitions. She meant to do what she liked in this as in everything else.

Her mother, though a person of very great merit, was not so intelligent as the Grand Duchess, and never suspected that those who spoke to her with such tender solicitude about her eldest daughter's future did so from interested motives, and simply because they wanted to keep under their control a girl who without doubt represented the best *parti* in Europe.

Among other suitors, there presented himself a prince of the Royal House of Bavaria, Prince Henry, whose mother, by birth a Princess of Liechtenstein, was distantly related to the Dowager Duchess of Luxemburg. Being a Catholic, Prince Henry seemed at first sight to be quite a suitable match for the youthful Sovereign. Strong efforts were made in different directions to ensure his winning this first prize in the Royal matrimonial market; but they all came to nothing in face of the passive opposition of Marie Adelaide, who persevered in her decision to wait before entering the marriage state until she should have met the man who really appealed to her imagination, as well as to her reason, and on whom she would be glad to bestow her hand.

The Emperor William watched all her actions with unusual interest. He would have dearly liked one of his own sons to have a chance of bringing home this much-coveted bride, but all Hohenzollerns were staunch Protestants, whilst the Duchess of Luxemburg had announced her determination never to wed

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

anyone who professed another creed than that which she upheld.

This settled the question so far as a Prussian candidate was concerned, and it was after having realised this last fact that the Emperor William II. gave his patronage to the Bavarian prince, using his best endeavours to persuade the Grand Duchess, as well as her mother, that for many reasons Prince Henry would be able to protect their interests should untoward events happen to endanger the safety of the small State.

All this diplomacy failed, and the girl whose future gave so much anxiety to so many people is still unmarried, and seems to persevere in her intention to remain so, at least for the present. She is credited with having made the remark that the far future would be time enough for her to give a thought as to the personality of any eventual suitor, and that for the present she felt quite content with her condition. This persistence in refusing all the offers which she received brought about an estrangement between her and her mother, and the Dowager Duchess absented herself from Luxemburg more frequently than had been the case before, leaving her daughter to the care of her attendants and of her household.

When the present war began the Duchess was sounded by Germany as to the attitude which she meant to adopt if by any means the neutrality of her small State were violated by the armies of the Kaiser, and she was offered considerable advantages if she were willing to agree to let them pass through her

GERMAN TROOPS IN LUXEMBURG

territory. But the young girl refused them all with proud disdain, and made a public protestation against the conduct of Prussia, returning afterwards to her palace, where she locked herself up and refused to see the German officials and generals who humbly craved the honour to present their respects to her, according to the orders they had received from Berlin.

The Emperor, in spite of his rage at the courageous independence of the Duchess, did not vent his anger either upon her or upon her subjects. His troops passed through her territory without committing depredations; on the contrary, they treated the inhabitants with the utmost courtesy, paying for everything that they took and behaving like gentlemen: very different from the conduct which marked their presence in Belgium. William II. was keenly conscious of the matrimonial importance of the Princess Marie Adelaide, as well as of the advantages that might accrue for Germany and for its politics if she were brought to look at things from his point of view and to bestow herself, her millions, and her Grand Duchy on an admirer of German ways and German grandeur. He tried to win her good graces, and conferred a high decoration on her and on her mother as a mark of his particular esteem; and, further, he asked his cousin the Grand Duke of Baden, to influence the young Grand Duchess through his wife, who was the aunt of Marie Adelaide, in order to persuade her that it was better for her own interests to adhere to the policy which he thought he had inaugurated with such success when he declared war upon Russia. He even

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

hinted to her that she might win some solid advantages from a friendly attitude in regard to him and to his armies, and that when peace came to be discussed he would arrange matters so that a considerable part of Belgian territory would be added to the dominions of Luxemburg.

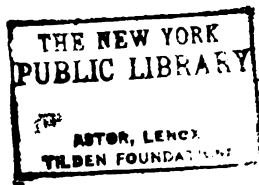
But this immoral proposition only added to the feelings of indignation which the Duchess felt already in regard to the Emperor. The Queen of the Belgians was her own cousin, her mother, the Duchess Marie José in Bavaria, being the sister of the Dowager Duchess of Luxemburg; and Marie Adelaide was the last person capable of despoiling anyone, especially a member of her own family. She scornfully refused the insidious offers which were made to her, and she shut herself up in a haughty silence that would have told strange things to William II. had he only understood it.

People who well know the girl who at present is the youngest sovereign in Europe, declare that in her marriage, as well as in many of her actions, she will surprise the world and her family, and rumours of an attachment that she bears to a man of whom her mother does not approve have recently circulated among her subjects. It is difficult to say whether they are justified, and time alone can show; but in the meanwhile the Duchess Marie Adelaide remains the despair of all the ambitious Royal mothers whose sons would be in the position to aspire to the hand of the richest heiress in Europe.

The relationship existing between the Royal fami-



GRAND DUCHESS MARIE ADELAIDE OF LUXEMBURG



KING ALBERT OF BELGIUM

lies of Luxemburg and Belgium gives a natural continuation from the one to the other. Belgium has no braver patriots than King Albert of Belgium and his wife. Equally are they devoted to their country and to each other. How they came to be betrothed is a love tale full of sweetness. For Elisabeth of Bavaria her marriage was an idyll that, unfortunately for her, has turned into a drama. This circumstance, however, has not impaired the deep love that presided at her union with King Albert. They met for the first time at the wedding of her sister, the Princess Gabrielle, with Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, the present Crown Prince of that country. Princess Elisabeth was at that time a slight, fair girl of twenty-four, timid, and of a retiring disposition. Much of her time was spent in works of charity, her most beloved occupation being to help her father, the late Duke Karl Theodor in Bavaria. He was an oculist of considerable fame, and devoted his scientific knowledge to the poor, whom he treated without remuneration simply because he wanted to help them. She had been brought up most carefully. The natural tendencies of her very noble nature had been developed and encouraged through the training which she had received. Her charms made an immediate appeal to Prince Albert of Belgium, as he still was at that time, and who, himself of a timid temperament, was irresistibly attracted by the serious, earnest, and unaffected girl, who never came forward in public except when obliged to do so by force of circumstances. She, on her side, was struck by the nobility of thought

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

which characterised Prince Albert, without ever dreaming that he was in love with her. The marriage was exceedingly popular, even among those who expected the future successor of wily King Leopold to choose a more brilliant consort. When he brought his bride to his home at Brussels, his parents, the Count and Countess of Flanders, at once appreciated the sweet nature of Princess Elisabeth.

Subsequent events proved that he had made a wise choice, because to-day the whole world has recognised the rare qualities which distinguish the loyal and beautiful nature of the Queen of the Belgians, and has admired the heroic conduct which kept her at her husband's side through all the dark hours that have thrown their sinister shadow over the unfortunate land of Belgium. The name of Queen Elisabeth will always remain engraved on the minds and in the hearts of those who have had the opportunity to watch her devotion to her husband, and her care for the wounded soldiers whom she helped to pick up on the battlefield; and many a one amongst the latter has blessed the day when their Sovereign took to himself for a wife the heavenly messenger who came to speak to them of hope and of mercy at a time when a reign of mercilessness seemed to have fallen on the world.

If the marriage of King Albert has been in every respect an ideal one, the same cannot be said of the Belgian Royal Family in general. The dissensions which existed between the late King Leopold and his Queen were common property, and it was related

LOVELESS MARRIAGES

that when Marie Henriette was dying she asked the sister of charity who was attending her to raise her in her bed, wanting, she added, to kneel once more and pray for herself, because there was none to do so among those nearest related to her, and she did not want to appear before her Maker without having begged Him to be merciful to her in her last hour. Her two eldest daughters also did not find happiness in their married lives. The adventures of the Princess Louise and her quarrels with her husband, Prince Philip of Coburg, employed the courts of law of almost every country in Europe. Princess Louise was more sinned against than a sinner herself. She was united to a man of brutish tendencies, who could not find a better way to get rid of a wife whom he did not want to divorce, on account of the large fortune she would inherit one day, than by locking her up in a mad-house. She was kept there for six years, and only escaped through the devotion of the only disinterested man whom she had ever known, and whom both her father and her husband accused of all kinds of crimes, in order to vilify his name.

The Princess Stephanie had also a sad life after her marriage to the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria. She only found some peace after her second marriage with a simple gentleman, the Count Lonyay.

Neither of these princesses had reason to care inordinately for her father, whose selfishness and personal aims had obliged them to contract loveless marriages with men whom they could neither like nor respect. As for their youngest sister the romance

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

which culminated in her marriage with the present head of the Bonaparte dynasty is still fresh in people's minds, and for a considerable time kept universal sympathies riveted on its development and its vicissitudes.

The late King Leopold was one of the most selfish men alive ; he was fond of France, and used to spend the greater part of his time there, making rare appearances in Brussels. He disliked his capital owing to the impossibility of leading there the easy, unfettered kind of existence he was so fond of, and of introducing to Brussels society the person whom he had married morganatically, and who, before he had done so, had been one of the stars of a music-hall at Montmartre. He built for her a splendid villa at Villefranche, near Nice, where he preferred living to anywhere else. So strongly was he attached to France as an abode that he became alarmed lest this might be made difficult or unpleasant for him were his daughter to wed the Pretender to the throne of the Bonapartes. Consequently, he forbade the Princess Clementine to think of Prince Victor Napoleon, and did all that lay within his power, though without success, to oblige the latter to give up his Brussels residence and, indeed, to leave Belgium. When his daughter implored him to yield to her wishes, and to remember that she had absolutely no one to love or to take care of her, he brutally replied that she did not require anything of the kind, and that if she was not content with her present position she could go where she liked. The fact was that the crafty old man

A SELFISH MONARCH

was glad to find a pretext to quarrel with his children so as to have reason for cutting them out of his will. For this reason he had opposed every marriage offer which they had, and he cursed the Princess Stephanie when she declared that she was going to be united to Count Lonyay. He would have done the same in regard to the Princess Clementine had the latter not been wise in her generation and expressed her willingness to conform to the King's wishes—conduct which obliged him to treat her with some consideration, a concession which he denied to all the other members of his family, whom he bullied and worried in turns.

The Princess Clementine was somewhat of a diplomat. She knew that her father's health was not of the best, and she armed herself with patience, and made up her mind to wait until her father was dead and she became free to do whatever she liked. The heavens proved merciful, because the King succumbed a few months later to the disease of which he had long been suffering, and though quarrels without number followed concerning his inheritance, his daughters found themselves at liberty to shape their lives according to their own wishes.

The Princess Clementine at last married Prince Victor Napoleon Bonaparte at the castle of Moncalieri, near Turin, the residence of his mother, the saintly Princess Clotilde of Savoy, about ten months after the death of Leopold II.

The latter's successor had given a cordial assent to a union upon which he knew the happiness of his cousin depended. The Princess returned to Brussels,

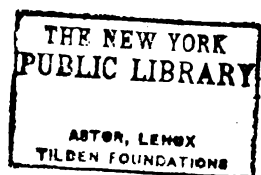
ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

where she settled with her husband in the lovely house which the latter had built for himself in the Avenue Louise. Two children, a daughter and a son, the heir to all the glories and all the misfortunes of the Napoleonic dynasty, were born to them, and husband and wife remained on the best of terms with King Albert and his consort. They were quite content with the life they had mapped out for themselves, until the war drove them out of their home and obliged them to seek a refuge in England, whose hospitable shores received them with a cordiality one meets nowhere outside of Great Britain.

In England they found themselves affectionately welcomed by the aged Empress Eugénie, who was very fond of the Princess Clementine. Fate had destined the Empress to witness, for the second time in her life, the invasion of her beloved France by the Teuton hordes. The widow of Napoleon III. lived through a period of emotion that opened all the old wounds and brought with graphic vividness before her aged eyes the tragic scenes she had passed through when France was last invaded. But with that wonderful vitality which makes her such an extraordinarily attractive woman, even in her old age, she had interested herself from its earliest beginnings in the romance of her nephew with the youngest daughter of King Leopold, and she had done her best to further its cause, until at last it had culminated in happiness. Eugénie was always somewhat of a matchmaker; she kept an attentive eye on the marriages of all the members of the Royal families of Europe, and was always glad



THE ROYAL FAMILY OF BELGIUM



THE BELGIAN ROYAL CHILDREN

when fate allowed her to further an alliance. When, as in the case of the King of Spain and Princess Ena of Battenberg, matters quickly arranged themselves, she was ecstatically happy. She always had a warm regard for the late Queen of the Belgians, Marie Henriette, and an equal affection was lavished on the latter's child, who, on her side, always gave the widowed Empress a loyal devotion. Princess Clementine never forgot that Eugénie was the widow of the head of the race to which her husband belonged, and that she represented a world of great things vanished into eternity, after having seemed to be eternal to so many people. Few suspected that the second Empire was destined to crumble as completely as the first.

The King and Queen of the Belgians have three lovely children, and although he is still so young the world has already speculated as to whom the youthful Leopold, Duke of Brabant, is to marry. In Brussels it was currently said that the Queen would have liked her son to wed either an Austrian archduchess or else a Bavarian princess. Both these eventualities are now out of the question, and it is not outside the limits of probability that an Infanta of Spain, one of the daughters of King Alphonso, may in time have the chance to become the future Queen of the Belgians. This would be a most suitable match from every point of view. Not the least of its advantages would be the warm sympathy with which it would be accepted in England, where the public will never henceforward dissociate itself from the fortunes of that noble Belgian nation, who, together with its King and

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

Queen, has given such a magnificent example of fortitude to the world. This fact alone would ensure to the Royal children of Belgium the most august alliances, both as regards position and wealth, while the descendants of the Emperor William, notwithstanding all his boasted power and might, will never be looked upon in future as fit mates for thrones where honour is counted as worth and a king's word must be his bond.

CHAPTER VI

ITALY AND SERVIA

WHEN the late King Humbert wedded his fair cousin, the lovely and clever Margherita of Savoy, the marriage was the subject of a good many criticisms not only in Italy but also among diplomatic circles throughout Europe. The heir to what then seemed to be the tottering throne of Victor Emmanuel found himself placed in a most difficult position regarding his proposed marriage. The principles of the Savoy dynasty prohibited the choice of a Protestant wife, and no Austrian Archduchess or Spanish Infanta, to whom the Kings of Sardinia had generally gone to seek consorts for themselves, would have anything to do with the son of the usurper who had dethroned the Bourbons at Naples, and the Habsburgs at Florence and Modena, and who then was already credited with the intention of seizing the patrimony of the Catholic Church.

The younger brother of the Prince of Piedmont had evaded the difficulty by marrying a lady who did not belong to a Royal House, the Princess Pozzo Della Cisterna, whose mother had been a Countess of Mérode ; but it was felt at the Court of Turin that the future King could hardly imitate this example, and Cavour,

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

who was still responsible for Italian politics, insisted upon the necessity of Humbert choosing a princess of Blood Royal. When Cavour died, however, nothing had been settled concerning this important question, and for many reasons Victor Emmanuel did not care to renew it. But at last he also felt that the matter could not be continually put off, and it was then that an Italian statesman lately deceased, the Marquis Visconti Venosta, bethought himself that there existed in Italy a princess who was in possession of all the necessary requisites to make her acceptable to the King as a daughter-in-law. This girl was Prince Humbert's cousin, the only daughter of the late Duke of Genoa, the beautiful Princess Margherita, who had just reached her sixteenth year.

At first Victor Emmanuel did not take kindly to the idea. He disliked his sister-in-law, the widowed Duchess of Genoa, for many reasons, into which it is useless to enter here. Moreover, he was strongly opposed to marriages between first cousins. He, nevertheless, was forced to realise that to send his heir to seek a wife anywhere abroad was to expose him to needless affronts, and so he consented to the proposition, and even condescended to pay a visit to the Duchess, to express his desires concerning this important question.

The Duchess was delighted, and Prince Humbert equally so. He had been in love with the charming girl for some time, but had never dared hope to win her for his bride. He could hardly believe in his own happiness when told that his father looked kindly on their union.

VICTOR EMMANUEL

The marriage was solemnised amidst great rejoicings at Turin, on April 22nd, 1868, and the new Princess of Piedmont soon won for herself golden opinions all over her country. Princess Margherita, until her wedding, had lived an existence of complete seclusion, which had been for the most of the time spent at Stresa, on Lake Maggiore, where her mother had a villa in which she resided for the greater part of the year. She had never appeared at Court, where the position of the Duchess of Genoa was, to say the least, a painful one since her second marriage with the Marquis Rapallo, which had excited the ire of Victor Emmanuel to such a degree that he had threatened to deprive his sister-in-law of her title and of her widow's dowry, and, furthermore, to separate her from her children.

It was therefore almost as a stranger that the young wife of Prince Humbert appeared at Turin, and, for some reason which he never explained, Victor Emmanuel objected to his son remaining there after his wedding, and sent the young couple to Naples, where the palace of Capodimonte was put at their disposal. They spent the first two or three years which followed upon their marriage at Capodimonte, and there the Princess gave birth to her only child, the present King of Italy.

At Naples Princess Margherita endeared herself to all classes of the population, who saw her depart with great regret, and who would have liked her to settle there permanently. She contributed a great deal to make the Savoy dynasty popular all over Calabria, and throughout the southern provinces. At Florence, however, she never felt quite at her ease, probably on

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

account of the many remembrances left there by the dispossessed Grand Dukes of Tuscany, who had more partisans than the Bourbons of Naples, since the latter had long been execrated by their former subjects. The Florentine aristocracy, too, did not take kindly in those days to the House of Savoy, whose ambitions were considered to be dangerous to the welfare of Italy, and whose desire to get hold of Rome did not meet with sympathy among the classes that did not belong to the Irredentist party.

Nevertheless, the sweetness of the Princess Margherita would most likely have conquered even these recalcitrant people, had not events marched quicker than one had expected, and the war of 1870 afforded to Victor Emmanuel the opportunity he had been longing for, to seize at last the patrimony of the Church. When this fact had become accomplished, and the House of Savoy had settled in the Quirinal, the wisdom of the statesman who had advised the King to marry his son and heir to his fair-haired cousin became even more evident than had been the case before this important event. The Princess of Piedmont set herself in earnest to try and gain the affection and the regard of her future subjects, and soon she won for herself at first ardent admirers, and afterwards staunch partisans. Thanks to her tact, her gentleness, her courtesy, and never-failing kindness, the barriers which at first had separated the different circles of Roman and Italian society into Black and White parties, according to whether they were followers of the Pope or of the King, fell one by one, and people who at

THE RISE OF ITALY

first were shy of the Quirinal began to clamour to be admitted to the festivals which were regularly given there during the winter season.

When Victor Emmanuel died, the popularity of the new Queen increased day by day, owing largely to her capability of entering into the patriotic feelings which were shaking the whole of Italy at this period of her transformation from a second-rank power into a mighty kingdom, and who, moreover, belonging herself to the House of Savoy, would further its aggrandisement by all the means within her power, and with all the energy that was the characteristic of her noble race.

Her marriage with King Humbert had been a perfectly happy one, and successful from the private as well as from the political point of view. Unfortunately, when her son, the then Prince of Naples, attained the age when it became necessary to seek a wife for him, the same difficulties which had worried Victor Emmanuel so much at the time of his eldest son's nuptials cropped up again, and all the efforts of Italian diplomacy failed to persuade a Catholic Princess to unite her fate with that of the heir to the Italian throne. Once, when they were nearly successful, it was the Crown Prince who raised some objections, as the fiancée with whom it was sought to saddle him did not please him, and he declared to his parents that he would infinitely prefer to remain a bachelor all his life than to wed a woman whom he felt he could never love.

Queen Margherita at last grew quite alarmed at this obstinacy of her only son in refusing to make the slightest effort to find a suitable wife for himself.

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

She was not particularly fond of the young Duchess Hélène of Aosta, and would not have cared for her children, if she were to have any, to succeed to the Crown. Hoping that the Prince of Naples might chance to set eyes on a girl capable of attracting his fancy if he travelled about, she encouraged him in his desire to wander about the world. She tried, too, to get him to interest himself in young ladies in general, and to cultivate their conversation. But for a long time all her efforts in this direction proved useless, until at last one day the Crown Prince, whilst on a journey of courtesy at Cetigné, where he had been sent to return in his father's name a visit which the Prince of Montenegro had paid at the Italian Court, saw the beautiful Princess Hélène, and lost his heart to her immediately. She had just arrived from Petersburg, where she had been educated, together with her sisters, at the Smolna convent, under the special supervision of the Empress of Russia.

The Princess Hélène was as remarkable in girlhood as she was later when she became a woman. Not only beautiful in features, she was also intelligent, serious, sweet, and simple in her manners and in her behaviour. Cultivated, too, she had made excellent use of her years of study, and had a great talent for music. When talking with the Prince of Naples she quickly discovered that they had many tastes in common, and that their intelligences and characters were sympathetic to each other.

Nevertheless, when the princely visitor left the hospitable shores of Montenegro, where he had been

RELIGIOUS OBSTACLES

entertained with true Slav hospitality, he had not spoken a word which might have led the young girl to suspect he had made up his mind that she, and she alone, would be his wife.

The fact was that Victor Emmanuel was far too dutiful a son to attempt a step of such magnitude as his marriage without having previously ascertained the wishes of his parents on the subject, and obtained their agreement to his wishes. He therefore returned to Rome, instead of pursuing his journey to Syria and the shores of Asia Minor, as had been his intention when he left Italy, and hastened to inform the King and Queen of the feelings which he had conceived for the dark-eyed princess, who, unknown to him, was weeping her eyes out with grief at having seen him depart, as she thought, for ever.

King Humbert was not at first quite pleased ; nor were his ministers and advisers, who did not think that the daughter of a mushroom prince, as the ruler of the Black Mountain was still considered to be in some quarters, was a good enough alliance for the Crown Prince of Italy. There also existed another impediment to his wishes, and that was the religious question. A schismatic Queen would have been quite impossible, and her presence at the side of an Italian Sovereign would never have been acceptable to the nation, and would seriously impair the popularity of the dynasty of Savoy. On the other hand, it was felt that one could hardly ask Princess Hélène to change her religion, to which, like all Orthodox Greeks, she was deeply attached. Besides, a conversion taking

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place under such circumstances, and required by a family who had for half a century been constantly at war with the Catholic faith, might have savoured of the ridiculous if not of heresy. The King thought most seriously over all these objections, and at last declared to his son that he did not very well see how they could be overcome, advising him at the same time to think no more of the Princess Hélène.

But the young man was not so easily discouraged ; he sought his mother, to whom he declared that he would prefer giving up his rights to the throne to his cousin, the young Duke of Aosta, rather than renounce his dream of future happiness, and he begged of her to use in his favour the great influence which she wielded over the King.

Queen Margherita was the fondest of mothers, and, apart from this, there was nothing in the world that she more passionately desired than to see her son happily married. She promised to do all that lay within her power to obtain Humbert's consent, and after some trouble she at last succeeded, thanks—so it was said at the time—to the help of the Dowager Empress of Russia, who acted as the fairy godmother on this occasion. Hearing through her niece, the Grand Duchess Militza of Russia, a sister of the Princess Hélène, of the latter's romance with the Crown Prince of Italy, the Dowager Empress wrote to Queen Margherita, and, without appearing to mix herself up in a matter which did not concern her, contrived, with that tact which never failed her on any occasion, to say such nice and kind things about the young Mon-

HÉLÈNE OF MONTENEGRO

tenegrin Princess that one could read between the lines that she desired nothing more sincerely than to see her enter the family circle of the Quirinal, and the House of Savoy.

At last, after some months of hesitation, and considerable negotiation between Rome and Cetigné, the King announced to the Chambers that he had given his consent to the alliance which his only son desired to make, and the marriage was fixed to take place in Rome in the autumn of that same year, 1896. The Princess Hélène prepared herself for her conversion, which was to be solemnised in the ancient shrine of Bari, that boasted of being dedicated to St. Nicholas of Bari, one of the patrons of Montenegro, and a saint worshipped with much fervour by the Orthodox Church.

The Princess Hélène accomplished this important action with the same simplicity which she brought into everything that she did, and in all the grave resolutions she was called upon to take. She loved her future husband passionately, and at the same time tenderly and devotedly, and from the moment when she had put her hand in his, and told him that she would be proud to spend her future at his side, she had determined to do everything to help him, and to induce the Italian nation to look with indulgent eyes upon the marriage which he was making. She knew very well his act was severely criticised in some quarters, where it seemed a humiliation for the House of Savoy to have to seek a bride in what was still considered by them to be a semi-savage country.

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The expectations of the Crown Prince were realised, and he found in his brunette wife the ideal companion he had dreamt of, but never hoped to meet. The young couple were perfectly happy together, and very soon the Princess Hélène not only won the confidence of her husband, but also influenced him in no small degree. She had considerable common sense, and, moreover, was singularly free from every kind of prejudice. In Petersburg she had lived in a most intellectual circle, and had met at the house of her two sisters, who were married to members of the Imperial Family, the most intelligent and the most remarkable men of which Russian society could boast. This circumstance had developed the naturally serious qualities of her character, and had necessarily broadened her views. Placed in a position which entailed upon her arduous duties, she never flinched before any one of them, and accepted the difficulties of a situation which at first was certainly delicate and further complicated by the fact that for some years her marriage remained childless. Despite all these circumstances she contrived to make herself popular, at first only with a small circle of people, and later on—especially after her conduct during the terrible earthquake of Messina had shown her quality to the world—the whole of the Italian nation suddenly realised the nobility of mind and of heart that characterised their young Queen and her devotion to her duties, to her husband, and to his people.

Politically, the marriage of Victor Emmanuel sounded the knell of the Triple Alliance, which was never congenial to his Queen. Hélène of Montenegro would not

TRIPLE ALLIANCE WEAKENED

have been her father's daughter if she had not cherished the warmest affection for Russia, to whom he and his people owed so much, and where she had been brought up and had met with such kindness. Hélène was also a Slav, enthusiastic for the Slav cause, and she had had the opportunity to see Austrian treachery, and to appreciate Austria's distorted and false politics. Her whole nature rose in indignation at the duplicity with which this Power had always tried to disguise its sinister and hypocritical intentions in regard to the Balkans in general, and especially in regard to Servia, which it wished to annihilate, or at least to render entirely dependent upon Austrian goodwill.

The young Queen, who, of course, was a Montenegrin Princess by birth, felt the warmest sympathy for the cause of the Servian nation, and this sympathy was further increased when the present King Peter was called to the throne. King Peter's consort, Princess Zorka, had been the eldest sister of Queen Hélène, and when Zorka died—which was before her husband ascended the throne of Servia—Queen Hélène took charge of her three children, watching over their education and their welfare, and insisting that her niece and namesake, the Princess Hélène, should spend part of her winters in Rome, where she stayed at the Quirinal, and was treated by her Royal aunt with quite a motherly tenderness. The latter, though she had declared that she would never mix herself up in politics, was far too clever not to be initiated into their intricacies by the King, who appreciated her clear way of looking at things, and the calm impartiality of her

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judgments, and who liked to consult her in every important decision he found himself called upon to make. Unconsciously to them both the young Queen came in time to acquire a considerable influence over the mind of Victor Emmanuel—an influence which she exercised with tact and discretion, and which certainly proved beneficial to the cause of civilisation and of progress. In that respect the marriage of the King of Italy with the Montenegrin Princess was an event of unusual magnitude, which brought about unforeseen consequences. The Russian Foreign Office had favoured the marriage, and had brought such pressure to bear on the Prince of Montenegro when at first he had hesitated to allow his daughter to change her religion that he was induced to look in a kindly way upon the abjuration. This move on the part of Russia was a master stroke, quite remarkably judicious and far-seeing.

In all the events of recent times that have taken place, the part played by Italy has been far more important than the public has been allowed to guess. The attitude which she has now adopted has a decidedly favourable effect on the cause of the Allies in the gigantic war that is being waged between Germany, and the nations who are fighting against the accursed militarism that Prussia has introduced, and of which she is the incarnation.

I have spoken of the children of King Peter of Serbia, and of the affection with which the Queen of Italy has watched over their childhood. There are three of them, the present Crown Prince Alexander,

A TERRIBLE SHADOW

and his elder brother—who, by a clever stroke of diplomacy on the part of some people who feared that the impetuosity of his character might compromise his country should he ever reign, was induced to resign his rights to Alexander—and one daughter, the Princess Hélène. The latter is a charming girl, not so beautiful as her aunts and her own mother had been, but graceful, pleasant, and extremely well brought up. She enjoyed quite a unique position at Belgrade. Owing to the fact that there was neither a Queen nor a Crown Princess there, it became part of her duties to take their place, and to do the honours of her father's house in the capital. She acquitted herself very well, being sincerely liked by Society as well as by the diplomats accredited at the King's Court. What, however, she preferred to everything else was to go to Rome to spend some months with her lovely aunt, who was always so kind to her.

Princess Hélène has had more than one offer, and might easily have married had she wished, but so far she has shown no inclination to do so. Queen Hélène, however, thought differently, and would have liked to see her rule a Royal establishment where the alliance would bring advantage to the Karageorgievitch dynasty. Such a marriage would have done much to remove the ostracism the House was subjected to by other reigning houses, owing to the part which it was suspected to have played in the plot that had brought about the terrible assassination of King Alexander and his ill-fated consort, Queen Draga.

Whilst Queen Hélène was speculating as to whom she

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could find who would be worthy of her charming niece, and who might fulfil the essential conditions which were considered to be indispensable to any marriage that she might make, the Queen had occasion to see one of the most prominent of Servian statesmen, M. Pashitch, who, having come on a visit to Rome, asked to pay his respects to her, and was consulted by her on this important matter. M. Pashitch did not hesitate, and told her that if it were only possible to arrange a match between the Princess Hélène and a member of the Russian Imperial Family, this event would certainly help to consolidate the Karageorgievitch dynasty upon its throne, and add immensely to its prestige in Servia.

This was, however, easier said than done. With the exception of the Grand Duke Peter, the husband of the Princess Militza of Montenegro, the eldest living sister of the Queen, it was not often that a Russian Grand Duke visited Italy and especially Rome; and strange to say he would not consent to invite his niece to stay with him and his wife at Petersburg for fear that they might be accused of wishing to marry her off to one or other of the several unmarried Grand Dukes and Imperial Princes who were there. Happily for Queen Hélène, Fate, who had always been kind to her, came to her help. The eldest son of the Grand Duke Constantine passed through Italy on his way to Greece, where he was going to see his aunt, Queen Olga of the Hellenes. He made a brief stay in Rome, and of course came to present his homage to the King and Queen of Italy.

PRINCE JOHN OF RUSSIA

He is a very nice young man ; not brilliant, perhaps, but intelligent in his way ; honest and worthy in every possible respect ; a gentleman in the fullest meaning of that word, and the heir to a considerable fortune. He did not bear the title of Grand Duke, being only the great-grandson of an Emperor, but was styled a prince of the Imperial Blood with the title of Highness. He is also good-looking, and well calculated to appeal to the feelings of a romantic young girl. The Princess Hélène liked him at once, and tried to make herself pleasant to him—an effort in which she completely succeeded. The Prince John of Russia was soon head over ears in love with her, and confided his feelings to the Queen, at first very timidly, but with more enthusiasm when he was encouraged. It was not long before the question of a marriage between the two young people came seriously to be discussed ; it formed the subject of many negotiations between Rome, Petersburg, and Belgrade.

At last things were settled, and the wedding was celebrated at Peterhof in the course of the summer of 1911, in presence of the Emperor of Russia, and of the whole Imperial family. It was also something of a political event, because the King of Servia, who accompanied his daughter to Russia, and M. Pashitch, who had also travelled to Petersburg for this important event, had long conversations with M. Sazonoff, and the other ministers of the Tsar, thus inaugurating new and warmer relations than those which had preceded this alliance between the Romanoffs and the Karageorgievitchs.

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King Peter, who is no fool, was especially delighted with Princess Hélène's marriage, because it gave him the hope of being able to bring about another and far more important one: that of his son, the Crown Prince, with one of the daughters of the Tsar. I have said already that, as regards that hope, it may yet come to be realised after the present war comes to an end, when the brilliant and heroic conduct of the heir to the Servian throne may win him sympathies which he did not obtain when last he visited Petersburg on the occasion of the christening of his sister's first-born son in January, 1914.

In general, after the war is over, the importance from the matrimonial point of view of the heirs of the different Slav kingdoms of the Balkan Peninsula will be far more considerable than is the case at present, and their alliances will become the subject of just as much speculation and negotiation as those of other Crown Princes, and perhaps even more so, having regard to what I have already referred to in connection with German princes and princesses. It will not be surprising, therefore, if even the Tsar is disposed to look with favour upon an attempt to win the heart of one of his daughters by either the Roumanian or the Servian heirs. As for the Crown Prince of Montenegro, he is already married. The Princess Jutta of Mecklenburg, the granddaughter of the Princess Augusta of Cambridge, was very glad to find him as a husband, and did not hope at the time when her wedding took place that she could ever become a Queen. Princess Jutta is a nice little thing, and she has succeeded in

A ROYAL PEACEMAKER

making herself liked by the rough Montenegrins, who were charmed by her blonde beauty, and who appreciated the extreme dignity of her manners more than did her husband, who, if rumour is not mistaken, has not always been kind to her. They have no children, and the Crown will pass to the King's second son, Prince Mirko, who is married to a Russian lady, the daughter of a certain Colonel Constantinovitch, an exceedingly pretty woman, with whom, however, he also does not get on, in spite of the fact that they have several children. In general, the present Queen of Italy has had considerable perplexities with regard to her brothers, whose conduct has not always been everything that she could have wished. Queen Hélène more than once has had to come to their help, either with her purse or with her advice. Especially has her aid been sought to soothe the just anger of her father, who more than once declared that if his sons did not behave better he would wash his hands of them once for all, and forbid them to live in their native country, where the different scandals of which they were the heroes were fast discrediting the dynasty.

But King Nicholas, if he had reasons to complain about his sons, could on the other hand feel justly proud of the remarkably good alliances which his daughters had contracted. Apart from the Queen of Italy, whose marriage was exceptionally brilliant, the other Princesses of Montenegro were all wedded to men with numerous advantages of position and of fortune. The eldest, Militza, became the wife of the Grand Duke Peter Nicolaievitch, with whom she has been always

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exceptionally happy. The second, Anastasia, or Stana, after a few years of a tempestuous and stormy union with Duke George of Leuchtenberg, succeeded in obtaining a divorce from him, and remarried very soon afterwards the Grand Duke Nicholas, the brother of her sister's husband and the present Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army. As for the third one, Princess Anna, she is the consort of handsome Prince Francis Joseph of Battenberg, the brother-in-law of Princess Beatrice of Battenberg, and a most amiable man. The Princesses Xenia and Vera are still unmarried, and the King is not without hope that he may yet in time arrange a union for one or the other of them with another member of the Russian Imperial Family, either one of the sons of that same Grand Duke Constantine who is the father-in-law of the Princess Hélène of Servia, or with one of the boys of the Grand Duke Alexander and of the Grand Duchess Xenia, the sister of the Tsar. He has been so lucky hitherto in the establishment of his children that he is in a certain sense justified in indulging in such an ambition; and one thing is certain, and that is, that if such a marriage ever takes place it will be immensely popular in Russia, where Montenegro and its ruler are in possession of the warmest sympathies, and count far more partisans than is generally known in the rest of Europe.

CHAPTER VII

GREECE, ROUMANIA AND BULGARIA

THERE are other Balkan States beyond Servia and Montenegro where the marriages of the rulers of the reigning dynasties have had considerable influence on the destinies of their particular countries.

Greece was the first of them to attain to some importance, by the election of Prince William of Denmark to the throne, whose family alliances gave him an exceptionally strong position. From the period when the children of the King reached a marriageable age, Greece was a place toward which the glances of mothers with daughters were directed with longing and anxiety. Greece was a peaceful country, too, wisely administered, and, in spite of several most foolish wars in which it had got entangled, had succeeded in keeping free from internal revolutions such as had shaken and threatened the existence of its neighbours. The Royal family had so many powerful connections that it was hardly likely Greece could ever come to grief, even if its popularity became impaired, as in fact it did, a few years ago, after the unsuccessful war which had been waged against Turkey. King George was a wise man in his generation, and he had shown it from the first day of his election to the throne of the Hellenes, when he

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had taken to himself for a consort the Grand Duchess Olga Constantinovna of Russia, one of the loveliest girls in Europe.

This marriage had been arranged for him partly through the influence of his sister, the wife of the Russian heir-apparent, who was later on to become the Empress Marie Feodorovna. The Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Alexandra, also had a good deal to do with the matter.

The Grand Duchess Olga was the niece of the Tsar Alexander II. ; she had an enormous dowry, which the generosity of her uncle had increased, when he consented to her becoming a Queen. Politics had had just as much to do with this marriage as personal affection, which, however, was not missing from it, because the young King had become passionately attached to his beautiful bride, and the marriage turned out a very happy one, even after the enthusiasm of the first months had disappeared. Queen Olga made herself very popular in Greece, where Russian sympathies had always been strong, and where the fact that the consort of the Sovereign happened to belong to the Greek Orthodox Church added a great deal to the feelings of affection which she inspired. When her eldest son was born, and received the name of Constantin, which an ancient legend associated with the hopes of a Greek monarch reigning once more in antique Byzantium, the enthusiasm which the event excited was quite unprecedented, even in a country where passions are so fierce as they are in the kingdom of the Hellenes. And as the numerous children of the

GREECE AND RUSSIA

Queen grew up to manhood and womanhood, the Greeks felt that considerable national advantages might come from the marriages the Royal children were likely to make.

Queen Olga was essentially Russian in her sympathies, and she remained more strongly attached to the land of her birth than perhaps some of her subjects liked; they reproached her sometimes, indeed, with spending too much of her time in Russia. Though the Queen made herself intensely respected, and though she was beloved by all who knew her, as I have had occasion to say before, still certain people began to criticise her and also her political opinions; and she was reproached for trying to make Greece the humble servant of Russia. It was feared especially by these troubled souls that she would try her best to make her children marry in the land of her birth, and what confirmed this idea was the care which she took to teach them Russian, and to inspire them with affection for everything that belonged to that country.

King George was the only one who felt no fear as to the Slav leanings and sympathies of his wife. He knew that she was, above everything else, a woman of duty, and that she would never allow her personal feelings to interfere in matters of State. When his eldest son arrived at an age when it became necessary to give him some inkling of what was going on in other countries, so as to prepare him for his duties in the future, he decided to send him to Berlin in order to have him trained there from the military point of

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view. He arranged with the Emperor William I., who was still alive at the time, to establish the Crown Prince in Potsdam, where he was to enter the First Regiment of the Prussian Foot Guards as a lieutenant.

The Duke of Sparta, for such was the official title of Prince Constantin, spent rather over two years in Germany, and was often invited to the house of the then Crown Prince and Crown Princess. He saw a good deal of their younger daughters; Princess Sophy was about seventeen years old at the time. If not regularly beautiful, she was still pleasing and agreeable and immensely clever. The two young people quickly became attracted to each other, to the secret pleasure of the future Emperor Frederick and of his consort, to whom the idea of seeing their daughter become one day a Queen appealed extremely. But the illness and subsequent death of the Emperor prevented the Duke of Sparta from making any avowal of his affection to the youthful princess, and it was something like two years later, after the mourning for Frederick III. was over, that he decided to speak to William II., and also to the Princess herself, to ask her to honour him by becoming his wife.

William II. was delighted. He already had his eye upon the Near East, and the thought of having a sister sharing the throne of Athens appealed to his imagination, and opened to him visions of the future. Consequently he gave a joyful consent, stipulating, however, that his sister was to be allowed to retain her religion. The Emperor William II. accompanied his sister to

WILLIAM II. VISITS GREECE

Athens, where her marriage was solemnised with great pomp.

There is one curious incident connected with this journey of William II. to Greece, which, so far as is known to me, has never become public property. When he arrived on board his yacht in the Piræus, he donned the uniform of a British admiral; no one ever could understand for what reason, as England and Russia were not upon the best of terms at that period. There were some ill-natured people, indeed, who declared that it was done to vex Queen Olga, who was known to head the Russian party at Athens.

The marriage of the Duke of Sparta with the sister of the German Emperor was supposed to be an event of unusual political importance, and columns upon columns were written upon it in the newspapers of the world, whilst it caused grave diplomats to consider anxiously what eventual consequences it might have whenever the Near Eastern question happened to be raised. Timorous people saw already the Prussian Eagle installed at Athens, and one prophesied that the German sympathies of the Crown Prince, together with the influence of his wife, would draw the kingdom of the Hellenes into the closest and most intimate relations with the German Empire.

All these prophecies turned out to be quite false, because something like eighteen months after her marriage the Duchess of Sparta, having come to the conclusion that it was most awkward for a future Queen not to belong to the same creed as the country over which she would have to reign one day, publicly

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renounced the Protestant faith, and adopted the tenets of the Greek Orthodox Church. This step infuriated her brother, who, after having written violent letters to her and done his best to dissuade her from the step, declared that he would have nothing more to do with her. He forbade her ever to come back to Berlin, or to dare set her foot in any one of his houses again; and though the Empress Frederick pleaded the cause of her favourite daughter, it was of no avail; he would not retract the severe sentence which he had pronounced.

For nine years or so the brother and sister did not set eyes upon each other. Then came the illness of the Empress Frederick, and at her deathbed a reconciliation took place between them, and the Crown Princess of Greece was seen once more at the Berlin Court; she even took up her abode in Germany, at the time when political events obliged the Crown Prince to live abroad until the remembrance of the circumstances connected with the war with Turkey had passed away. The German Emperor in the meanwhile had become wiser, and bethought himself that it might not ultimately prove to the advantage of Germany to be on bad terms with the Hellenic kingdom, and that it would be better to resume the relations that had formerly existed. Black clouds were already obscuring the horizon in the Balkans, and the ambitions of Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria were beginning to preoccupy the various chancelleries of Europe. All these circumstances put together decided William II. to forget his wrath and to forgive his sister what,

PRUSSIA OFFERS HELP

in the first moments of his fury, he had declared to have been an action of which a traitor alone could have been guilty.

Nevertheless, the apprehensions of those wise diplomats who had felt sure that the marriage of the Crown Prince of Greece with a Princess of Prussia would mean the end of Russian influence in the Hellenic kingdom, turned out to have been groundless. During the recent Balkan war, it was to Petersburg and to Paris or London that the Greek Government turned for advice and protection, and it was there that it confided the secret designs which it nourished in regard to Constantinople and the Straits. Berlin was forgotten, or, at least, treated as a negligible quantity.

When King George was murdered at Salonika, William II. at once telegraphed to his sister and brother-in-law to assure them of his readiness to further, to the best of his ability, any plans they might feel inclined to make. He received a most polite reply, but that was all. At that time M. Venizelos was in power, and he would have restrained the King from committing himself in any way, even if the latter had wanted to do so. This wise politician nourished other ambitions, and being perhaps more convinced than most statesmen that the family ties of sovereigns have a good deal to do with their political convictions, he wanted to arrange an alliance between the new Crown Prince of the Hellenes and the Princess Elisabeth of Roumania, his cousin.

There was one moment when the plan seemed likely to succeed, but then other complications occurred,

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and objections were raised at Athens as well as at Bucharest. The new Queen of Roumania, though she had been wedded herself at sixteen, declared that she did not approve of too early marriages. Queen Sophy, too, expressed herself as more eager to see the future of her eldest daughter, the Princess Hélène, settled than that of her son, whom she considered as still too young to take unto himself a wife. If the truth need be told, they wanted at Athens to keep matters hanging on so as to have the possibility of arranging a match between the Crown Prince and one of the daughters of the Tsar—an ambition which the Queen, though a Prussian princess by birth, cherished quite as much as did her mother-in-law, the Dowager Queen Olga Constantinovna.

In Bucharest, those in highest places were well aware of the secret reasons which made the Greek Royal Family show some diffidence towards the possibility of a Roumanian marriage for its heir, and the young Queen Marie felt deeply hurt at what she termed "such duplicity." She would have liked to have the knowledge that her eldest daughter had married advantageously, but she did not care to settle irrevocably her son's future, and she had been made to understand that if she consented, and induced the King to consent, to the Crown Prince becoming engaged to the Princess Hélène of Greece, her own girl would have a greater chance to become the Queen of the Hellenes. A curious and rather disgraceful kind of bargaining was going on simultaneously at Athens and at Bucharest, with the probable result that the hopes

KING FERDINAND OF BULGARIA

and plans of politicians and leaders of parties in both these places were bound to collapse and crumble to pieces, as is so often the case with things that are too cleverly contrived.

If the Greek heir-apparent showed some hesitation in asking the Princess Elisabeth of Roumania to become his wife, there was another personage who would have given a good deal to induce her to look in his direction. King Ferdinand of Bulgaria had had his eye upon her for a long time as a possible bride for his eldest son. Undoubtedly such an alliance would have won many friends to the Coburg dynasty, and helped to consolidate it upon its newly-won throne. The King, who is clever, and one of the most intriguing politicians of his generation, had already in the matter of his own marriages carefully selected his two wives, choosing princesses whose family connections might prove of use to him in the ambitious schemes which he had nursed from the first day he had set foot upon Bulgarian soil. His first consort, the Princess Marie Louise of Parma, was a sweet woman, not perhaps excessively intelligent, but kind, good, and conscientious, who had brought as a dowry not only a considerable sum of money, but also the prestige of that great Bourbon name which, in spite of all its misfortunes and vicissitudes, still exercised some attraction and influence on the crowd. He had made her very unhappy by his selfishness and brutality, so that when she was dying she expressed her relief at having to leave a world which had proved so hard to her. After her demise, Ferdinand decided, at first, to remain

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a widower, and never again to give himself the trouble of having a wife before whom he would have to observe, at least, the outward convenances which society and a good education required from every man who had the least desire to be called a gentleman. He was fond of his liberty, fonder still of his independence, and did not care to abandon it to the caprices of a young girl, who would expect him to treat her with a respect which the unfortunate Princess of Parma had been far too weak and timid to compel. He engaged an excellent governess for his two daughters, who, besides, had the advantage of remaining under the immediate supervision and control of the Princess Clementine of Coburg, their grandmother. He thereafter began leading the existence of a gay bachelor.

So long as his mother, the Princess Clementine, was alive this was relatively easy for him to do ; but when she died he began to feel that the Palace of Sophia, as well as his summer residence of Euxinograd, wanted a mistress to do the honours of those two lovely places. His girls were still children, and also required to be chaperoned by someone of nearer interest than a lady-in-waiting. He felt besides that the plans he had nursed for such a long time were beginning to mature, and that when he would be proclaimed King the presence of a Queen at his side would become a State necessity. Therefore, during the frequent excursions which he was continually undertaking abroad, he looked round him in order to find a princess worthy, in his opinion, of sharing with him the crown he was about to put on his head, and at the same time willing

A KINDLY FATE

to do so. This last was by no means an easy matter, thanks to the reputation he had managed to acquire. He would never have consented to ally himself to a lady who could not boast of the bluest blood in Christendom, and he required also a wife intellectually able to hold her own, and to help him in the vast political designs he was nourishing in the secrecy of his heart.

Fate was kind to him, and brought him to the feet of Princess Eleonore of Reuss Kostritz, a cousin of the Grand Duchess Vladimir of Russia. She was no longer young—indeed, was not very far from her fiftieth birthday—but she was clever, extremely amiable, possessed the most dignified manners, and had spent the best years of her life engaged in charitable works, having won for herself the reputation of a person whose whole soul was vested in the task of relieving the miseries of mankind. When the Manchurian War broke out she started for the distant plains where it was being fought, and there, as a sister of the Red Cross, had worked with the utmost devotion. She was not rich, but highly connected, and through her cousins had an easy entrée in all the Courts of Europe, where from her earliest youth she had been welcomed with affection and respect. When Prince Ferdinand, as he still was at the time, saw her, he made up his mind at once that she would make him an ideal consort, and forthwith proposed to her.

To his surprise his offer was not received with enthusiasm. The Princess Eleonore was no fool, and she understood perfectly well the reasons that had

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induced her unexpected suitor to wish for the honour of her hand. She knew, that in marrying her, he imagined he was acquiring the protection and the sympathies of the Russian Court as well as those of Austria and Germany, and that he was actuated more by political motives than by anything else. But she was also a woman of wide good sense, and of strong character, who felt herself quite capable of holding her own, even against such a despot as Prince Ferdinand was supposed to be. She asked for time to make up her mind, and at last decided that the adventure was well worth the trying, and that in the worst of cases she could always come back to her old home, where her numerous nephews and nieces would give her a warm welcome. This marriage, which from both sides was entirely a political affair, was celebrated at Coburg on February 28th, 1908, and the newly married Princess was taken in great pomp by her husband to Sophia, where she made a solemn and ceremonious entry. She very quickly found herself at home there, and ruled the household of Prince Ferdinand with a firm but at the same time a liberal hand.

Her husband soon found out that she did not intend to be treated as a nonentity, but meant to make herself obeyed in all matters with which she was directly concerned. She advised him most sensibly, and by her unfailing tact prevented him falling into many mistakes through his hot and hasty temper. People respected her, and she was generally considered as the best friend not only that her husband but also that Bulgaria had. She was ambitious but just; a mean

A POLITICAL AFFAIR

action would be impossible for her to commit, and she would never lend herself to duplicity, even in politics.

The Prince was not in the least in love with her. His nature was so selfish and so lazy that it seemed hardly probable he would ever indulge in genuine sentiments of affection for anyone. But he was keenly sensible of the fact that she would prove an invaluable help to him in the future, especially when he succeeded—as he fondly believed he would—in effecting his entry into Constantinople in the quality of an Eastern Emperor. When the war broke out with Bulgaria and Servia against Turkey, he sought her advice and followed it—at least for a time. But when Adrianople was taken, the King lost his balance, and piled one mistake upon another, with the disastrous result that Bulgaria was beaten by her former allies, and that by the Treaty of Bucharest she was deprived of most of the advantages which she had won through her successful campaign against Turkey.

After peace had been concluded, King Ferdinand naturally looked about for the means to neutralise the bad effect which the conditions had had for him. And at this juncture he bethought himself that, having a son of an age to marry, he could not find him a more suitable bride than the eldest daughter of the new King and Queen of Roumania.

He therefore applied himself to win over not only the Roumanian cabinet, but also the Queen, by whom he was intensely disliked, as he knew very well. To achieve his end he began a series of intrigues, which

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have more than one chance of proving successful in the long run.

As will be seen from all that I have just revealed, it is the members of the Royal family of Roumania who are at the present moment the principal figures in the marriage markets of Europe. All the other Balkan kingdoms are eager to unite themselves with the Roumanian Royal Family, if only in order to influence Roumanian politics and to force them to bring their weight to bear on the course of events in the Near East.

Roumania to-day holds the key to the international situation, now that Italy has resolutely declared herself on the side of the Allies; and it is but natural that, looking at things from this particular point of view, Greece, Servia, and Bulgaria should try to enlist her sympathies in order to achieve, with her help, or through her determination to remain strictly neutral, the ambitious designs they have been nursing in the silence of their souls. Bulgaria especially has never renounced her dreams to establish herself at Constantinople as the successor of the Palæologues and the Porphyrogenetes; and the only serious opposition she thinks she has to dread is that of Roumania, who, if she were to favour Greece, would most certainly put a very effective spoke in the wheels of King Ferdinand's chariot. If, on the contrary, a Roumanian princess were to reside at Sophia, it would be most difficult for Roumania to exercise her influence in favour of the pretensions of Greece.

The only thing which might favour this ambitious

RUSSIA AND THE BALKANS

design is the circumstance that the King and Queen of Roumania have six children, and among them three daughters whose religion does not make them easy to marry. Barring the hope of seeing the Crown Prince of Greece propose to one of them, the heir to the Bulgarian throne would not be such a bad *parti* for one of the princesses, and thus family affection and parental solicitude play not a small part in the quarrels which divide the different populations of the Balkan Peninsula, and set them one against the other.

A curious thing, however, must not be lost sight of, which proves that, in spite of all the efforts that have been made to shake—if not to destroy—Russian prestige in the Near East, the attempt has completely failed. It is the general wish and hope, which is to be observed at Athens, as well as at Bucharest and at Sophia, that the powerful Russian Tsar should allow one of his daughters to ally herself to the future monarch of Roumania, and thus forge fresh links between her and the populations whom “Mother Russia” has helped to free from the Turkish yoke.

Among the members of the Greek Royal Family there is none who is in the possession of greater popularity in her adopted country than the wife of the present King's third brother, the Princess Hélène, the daughter of the Grand Duke Vladimir; and this in spite of the fact that the Russian sympathies of her mother-in-law, Queen Olga, were at one time severely criticised. It is to be noted, by the way, that Queen Olga herself was so incensed with these criticisms that since the war broke out she has refused to return to

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Athens, but has remained in Russia, not wishing that the position of her son might be embarrassed, or compromised by her presence, at a moment when he required to remain absolutely free as to any decisions he might find himself called upon to make in the interests of his monarchy.

While referring to the brothers of King Constantine as well as their marriages, I must say a word concerning Prince George and what at the time was called his extraordinary match. He was supposed to be in love with one of his English cousins, whom, however, he could not marry owing to the fact that the Greek Orthodox Church does not admit unions between near relations, and is less indulgent in this respect than the Russian branch, with whom arrangements can be made. For a long time the young man appeared to be quite inconsolable, until at last, during one of his frequent journeys to Paris, he came across the pretty and clever Princess Marie Bonaparte, the daughter of Prince Roland and of Mademoiselle Blanc, whose father had been the creator of Monte Carlo and of its famous Casino, which venture had allowed him to build up a huge fortune that passed to his three children. The Princess Roland died when giving birth to her daughter, who on her attaining her majority found herself one of the greatest heiresses in Europe. Princess Marie might have married long before chance threw her into the way of Prince George, but she had snubbed all her admirers with more or less impertinence, declaring that she would only wed with a member of a reigning dynasty. This event, however, did not seem

GEORGE OF GREECE MARRIES

a very likely one, owing to the fact that her pedigree left much to be desired, and the idea of seeing the grandchild of the owner of the largest gambling den in the world mate with Royalty shocked the ultra-loyalist feelings of monarchists in general.

Prince George, however, showed himself a man above vulgar prejudices, and reflecting that, after all, he was not marrying the daughter of Mlle. Blanc but that of Prince Bonaparte, he asked the hand of the haughty heiress, and was immediately accepted. The wedding took place at Athens, and the young couple lived there for some time—at least, for a part of the year; but soon the Princess Marie got weary of contemplating continually the ruins of the Acropolis, and began sighing for the Paris boulevards, the Avenue du Bois, Longchamps and Auteuil, and Parisian pleasures, as well as for the vast and beautiful palace which Prince Roland had built for himself in the Avenue d'Iéna, where the apartments formerly occupied by his daughter remained always ready and waiting for her. She gradually spent less time in Greece and more in France, and succeeded in transforming her husband into a finished boulevardier—at least, this is what one hears. On the other hand it must be admitted that there are things which go far towards proving that these sayings are nothing but gossip, because Prince and Princess George of Greece are both very fond of Denmark, and make long sojourns there. Lately, and since the war broke out, they have stopped in Copenhagen for a considerable time, and it is rumoured from other sources than those who attribute to them an inordinate love for

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the French capital that they would like to have a regular home on Danish shores.

It is difficult to know what truth there is in all these tales, but one fact remains and seems to be beyond contestation : and that is, that Queen Sophie does not get on very well with her pretty, fascinating sister-in-law, and that the latter prefers not to live surrounded by an atmosphere of hostility. Being absolutely independent of the bounty of King Constantine, she prefers to live where she can do what she likes, and lead the existence of a private person, able to claim, whenever she wishes to do so, all the privileges of a daughter-in-law of a sovereign. Her marriage certainly belongs to the number of those which one can call happy, but still it offers one curious peculiarity—that though it has not caused her husband to come down to her level, it has not quite raised her to his ; and that though it has allied French and Greek blood, it has not amalgamated them.

CHAPTER VIII .

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

THERE are few sovereigns whose marriage was the cause of so much heart-burning as that of the King of Spain. Ever since his birth speculations had been rife as to whom Alphonso XIII. was to marry. All the Habsburg and the Bourbon princesses had been named in conjunction with his future, the balance of opinion being that the Queen Mother, Marie Christine, would like to see him wedded to an archduchess, as her strong Austrian sympathies were very well known. Her own marriage was essentially one in which politics had played the principal part. It had been arranged by the dispossessed Queen Isabella, who had all along been dreading that her son would ally himself to the Montpensier family, which she hated ever since her sister, the Infanta Louise Fernanda, backed by all the influence of the Orleans, had set herself up as a rival, and raised her ambitious eyes to the throne of Spain. The passionate affection which King Alphonso XII. had conceived for his cousin, Donna Maria de las Mercedes, the daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Montpensier, had been the cause of much sorrow to his mother, who, though she had consented to grace the wedding ceremony with her presence, had never

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forgiven the young King for having dared to take for his Queen the daughter of parents who had continually intrigued in order to deprive him of his Crown. And when, three months after her marriage, a sudden and insidious disease had carried away the girl whom she disliked so intensely, Donna Isabella felt that Heaven itself had interfered on her behalf. Thereafter she directed all her efforts to persuade the widowed and inconsolable Alphonso to seek another bride, who might bring him the advantages of high connections and of an unblemished character.

The Austrian Court, too, ever since he had been called to the throne of his ancestors, had kept an eye on the youthful sovereign who ruled over Spain. The Ball Platz, ever eager to have a finger in every matrimonial pie, had always an archduchess ready to wed any eligible bridegroom she was told to accept. Don Alphonso was well known in Vienna, where he had studied at the Theresianum school, and whilst in Austria he had been very cordially treated by the Emperor Francis Joseph, as well as by the whole Imperial family. The widow of the Archduke Charles Ferdinand, the Archduchess Elizabeth, was especially cordial. Her only daughter, Marie Christine, had just been elected abbess of the Convent of Noble Ladies of the Hradschin in Prague, a dignity that was always conferred on a member of the Imperial family. The office did not prohibit marriage on the part of its holder. Marie Christine was a person of uncommon intelligence and considerable strength of character, with immense dignity, grand eighteenth-century manners, and a

AN INDIFFERENT SUITOR

warm heart, as well as a sweet disposition. She had not been very much out in society, as etiquette forbade the young archduchesses to mix too much in the pleasures of the world, and they lived in the state of semi-seclusion which was considered befitting to their high rank. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at if she fell in love with the Spanish prince, with whom her clever mother tried to bring her together as often as she could. Unfortunately, Don Alphonso's heart was already in the possession of his cousin; he paid no attention to Marie Christine, and noticed neither the wonderful charm which she possessed nor the noble qualities which made her such an exceptional creature. He left Vienna entirely heart-whole; but this was far from being the case with the young girl, who wept bitter tears when she thought that she had to give up the hopes in which she had been imprudently encouraged by all her family.

Time went on; Donna Maria de las Mercedes was carried away to the gloomy vaults of the Escorial, and Alphonso XII. was free once more. His best dreams had been rudely destroyed, and it became a matter of indifference to him who should take the place of the wife he had worshipped with all a boy's enthusiasm and a man's passion. Queen Isabella thought that it might be possible now to speak to him once more of the Archduchess Marie Christine, and he allowed himself to be persuaded that he could not find a better consort. His ministers, too, with Canovas del Castillo at their head, were in favour of an Austrian alliance, and so one day the young King proposed to

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the girl, who had been secretly in love with him for a number of years, during a meeting which had been arranged between them at Arcachon, in France, and the following November saw them married with a great display of pomp at the Atocha Church in Madrid.

Marie Christine could hardly believe in her own happiness, and during the first months which followed upon her marriage lived in an atmosphere of joy, from which, however, she was very soon to be rudely awakened. The King was of essentially a flirting, fickle nature, for whom every woman's smile had attraction, and who could no more have remained faithful to his wife than have flown in the air at a time when balloons had not been invented. Had his first consort lived it is probable that he would not have been much different in the end; and, having married his present Queen entirely for political and dynastic reasons, it is not to be wondered at that he neglected her and soon forgot the elementary courtesies of life in his conduct towards her. Marie Christine suffered deeply and bitterly, but made no sign, and led a most retired kind of life in the solitude of the vast Royal palace of Madrid, spending her whole time with her children and carefully abstaining from meddling with politics or with the government of the country.

Most of those who met her pronounced her a non-entity, and wondered why her arrival in Spain had been preceded by such a reputation for cleverness, of which she seemed in reality to have very little, if any at all. Very quickly, then, Marie Christine came

THE QUEEN'S TRIUMPH

to be considered as a person of no importance, whose existence at the side of the King was a State affair but nothing else. When her first two children turned out to be girls it was generally felt that her marriage had been a failure, and that it was a pity Queen Isabella, and the responsible ministers of the King, had hurried him so quickly into an alliance that had brought with it none of the advantages which it had been supposed to possess at the time it was concluded.

Subsequent events, however, proved that the Queen Mother, as well as the statesmen who at that time were in charge of the interests of Spain, had seen more clearly than the general public in respect to the qualities of Marie Christine. When her husband died, and she was left suddenly in charge of a monarchy that had neither heir nor even tenant for the time, she displayed not only rare courage, but also considerable governmental aptitude, and astonished all those who had to deal with her by the clear way in which she grasped the intricate problems attending the political and commercial welfare of the country to which she had been a stranger but a few years earlier. She set herself to her difficult task with a quiet energy and determination that won her the respect of the bitterest enemies of the monarchy, and of even the staunchest opponents of the Bourbon dynasty. She was no more than twenty-seven years of age when she became a widow, and her son was born six months after his father's death. During that time she had to rule in the name of an unknown

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quantity, and without being able to guess who was going to succeed Alphonso XII. on the tottering throne of Spain.

Very few women would have found themselves capable of fighting against such terrible odds, and very few also could have done it with the success that attended her all through the sixteen years which her Regency lasted—years that were eventful not only for herself and for the little King, but also for Spain in general, especially at the period of the American War. Marie Christine compelled the world to admire and to esteem her; and she sacrificed herself, in the fullest sense of that word, to her arduous duties. She lived the existence of a recluse, imposing on herself the restriction never to admit anyone into her intimacy, to have no friends, to allow no intrigues to approach her, and to give up those enjoyments and pleasures which a woman of her age generally cares for. From time to time she used to hold a solemn reception at the Royal palace, where the grandees of Spain were admitted to the honour of kissing her hand; and from time to time, also, she was seen at the opera, where she was always met with great enthusiasm; but apart from these rare occasions she never showed herself in public, and the bull-fights which took place regularly during the winter season at Madrid were never frequented by her—a fact, by the way, which disposed the population of the Spanish capital to consider her prudish, they being, of course, enthusiastic about that wild form of sport, and considering it part of the duties of the

ENGLAND ADMIRED

Sovereign to attend. She educated her children with thoroughness, and gave especial care to the training of the young King, on whose frail shoulders reposed all the future of the haughty Spanish monarchy. For long she had serious grounds to fear that she would not succeed in bringing him up, the child being extremely delicate; more than once, indeed, he was at death's door during his infancy. As soon as he grew up she thought about his marriage, and began looking round for a suitable wife who would give to the Crown the heir whose birth was indispensable to the consolidation of the monarchy.

Strangely enough, Marie Christine, though an Austrian and a Habsburg, was not in favour of her son wedding an archduchess. She had become suspicious of the politics of the Triple Alliance, and did not want Spain to be drawn into the net of German intrigue. On the other hand, she also felt that her country was not strong enough to be able to go on without some kind of foreign alliance. France did not appeal to her, because her Catholic feelings were revolted at the anti-clerical policy which the Government of the Republic had inaugurated. Russia was too distant. There only remained, therefore, England, for which the Queen Regent had always felt the greatest admiration, added to her personal feelings of affection and of respect for Queen Victoria. The two Royal ladies had met one spring time, when the English Sovereign had been staying at Biarritz, and Marie Christine had driven over from St. Sebastian to welcome her warmly and affectionately. Ever since that

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time the widowed mother of Don Alphonso had developed in her son a taste for everything English, and had taught him to care for English literature, English art, English comforts, and English sports, the last of which appealed most strongly to the imagination of the young King.

It was after this memorable interview that Marie Christine began to think of an English bride for her beloved boy. The young lady whom she had in view was the youngest daughter of the Duke of Connaught, the Princess Patricia, who, it was reported to her, was pretty and accomplished in every way and represented perfectly the type of girl whom any man might have felt proud to win.

The Queen Regent was far too clever to allow her son to guess what she had in her mind, and merely explained to him that it was a necessity after he had attained his majority that he should start on a round of visits to foreign Courts for the purpose of getting into personal touch with the other monarchs in Europe, to whom he was still unknown, and also of making a call of courtesy upon his uncle the Archduke Frederick, and upon his relatives on his mother's side at Vienna. At the same time she tried to sound the English Court as to the possibility of an alliance between it and the young ruler of Spain. Queen Victoria was already dead at that time. King Edward had always dreamed about the day when England's splendid isolation should come to an end, and she would have come to an understanding with other Powers against an enemy of whose importance he had no false ideas, but whose worth he

THE QUEEN REGENT'S HOPES

appreciated at its full value. He was but too glad to listen to the overtures which were made to him from Madrid, of which the first intimation was conveyed to him in rather a strange manner. The King had a friend in whom he reposed a considerable degree of confidence; this was a man who, having begun his career as a journalist, had ended by being admitted into the inner circle of several European Courts. He was perhaps the best-informed man in Europe upon foreign politics. An Englishman by birth, he had spent a certain number of years abroad, travelling for his pleasure or on secret missions of unusual importance. This man—whose name I forbear from mentioning for various reasons into which it is needless to enter—had been sent to Madrid on an errand which required more than usual diplomatic knowledge to carry to a successful issue; and whilst there he had been presented to the Queen Regent. He soon installed himself in her confidence, and discussed with her some of the most important questions of the day. To him Marie Christine broached for the first time the subject of her secret desire in the matter of her son's marriage; she hinted to him that should an English princess decide to come to Madrid, she would receive a warm welcome, and she begged him to ascertain the probable attitude of King Edward VII. towards this, for the present, personal dream.

The personage to whom I am referring entered into her plan, and when he returned to England he took advantage of an invitation which he received to spend a week-end at Sandringham House to speak with King

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Edward about his recent journey to Madrid, and about the wish of Queen Marie Christine to secure for her daughter-in-law one of the nieces of the English Sovereign.

King Edward, who was far too clever not to appreciate this confidence for what it was worth, entered at once into the spirit of the secret communication which was made to him in such an unexpected manner. He liked to dwell upon the thought that almost all the thrones of Europe were occupied by relatives of his, and that nearly all his nieces were destined to wear a crown. He declared at once that he would send a warm invitation to Alphonso XIII. to visit him at Windsor or in London, and that whilst there he would give him every possible opportunity to meet the Princess Patricia.

Before this invitation had been accepted, rumours began to circulate concerning so-called English intrigues in Spain, with the object of getting that country to join the *entente cordiale* that subsisted between France and Great Britain, and of putting it under the immediate influence of Great Britain. The German Press especially became quite rabid, and long articles were written as to the infamous designs that were nourished in England and in France in regard to the future of Spain. The Queen Marie Christine saw them and shrugged her shoulders, and very few people either in London or in Paris took the trouble to read them seriously.

In the meanwhile, Alphonso XIII. started on his travels. He visited Vienna and stayed a few days

ALPHONSO XIII. TRAVELS

with his uncle, the Archduke Frederick, at the latter's lovely estate of Teschen, where he was offered excellent sport. Then Paris saw him for the first time, and at last he arrived in London, where he found summer in all its glory, and the rhododendrons in the parks still in full bloom.

In London, the youthful Spanish Sovereign was received with great cordiality, and won golden opinions everywhere he showed himself. He was an exceedingly bright and cheerful boy, full of life and fun, enthusiastic over all the new things which he noticed, and the wonderful sights which England offered to his inexperienced eyes. He dined at Windsor and danced at Buckingham Palace; and in due course he was introduced to the Princess Patricia, who, however, declared that though she found him very nice, she would on no account marry him, and did not feel the slightest ambition to wear the crown of a Queen of Spain.

It was just as well, perhaps, that the prospect did not appeal to her, because the impetuous King, instead of devoting his attention to her, as his mother would have liked him to do, immediately singled out, from the intimate circle at the Court, a fair and lovely girl, whose golden hair and blue eyes fascinated him from the first moment that he had seen them; she was the Princess Ena of Battenberg, another of the numerous granddaughters of Queen Victoria.

Princess Ena was a fine type of a healthy English girl. She had been admirably brought up by her most distinguished and clever mother, and she had

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had the advantage of spending her childish years under the roof of the late Queen, and consequently had seen from quite near the etiquette which governed the Court of a great monarch. She was amiable, pleasant, merry ; always in good temper, and fond of fun and of sport, the two chief characteristics of Alphonso XIII. The latter fell passionately in love with her, but did not dare to speak about it, nor even to write about the state of his feelings to Queen Marie Christine, who, in her dreary palace at Madrid, was waiting with anxiety for any news that might come to her as to the sayings and doings of her beloved son in London.

Now arrives an episode which will do away with a good many legends concerning the marriage of the present King and Queen of Spain. It is currently believed that the idea of it was first conceived by the Empress Eugénie, who had long wished to see her god-daughter, the Princess Ena, of whom she was excessively fond, become the wife of Don Alphonso de Bourbon. In reality, the aged Empress had never thought about it ; and it was the personage to whom I have already referred who, after his journey to Madrid, had first spoken to Eugénie about it. He knew that she had a certain amount of influence over Princess Henry of Battenberg, the mother of Princess Ena, and that more easily than anyone else she could broach the subject of this brilliant alliance and, at the same time, handle, with the tact for which she had always been justly famed, the delicate matter of Princess Ena's conversion to the Catholic faith—a

BETROTHED

matter which was indispensable if the marriage were to take place.

The exiled Empress was quite delighted, and entered with zest into the plot—if it can be called so—and by inviting the young people to come and see her simultaneously she encouraged them in the mutual love which was fast growing up between them. She also spoke at length with Princess Beatrice and King Edward about the possibility of arranging this unexpected alliance. King Edward advised his sister to assent to it, and finally it was settled that Don Alphonso should return to Spain, consult his own mother and his ministers as to the advisability of the marriage which he contemplated. Thereafter another meeting was to take place between him and the lady of his heart at Biarritz during the coming autumn, where the Princess Frederica of Hanover, remembering the kindness which Queen Victoria had shown to her at the time of her own wedding, and informed by the Princess Beatrice of the negotiations which were going on, offered her villa as a neutral meeting place, where the Spanish monarch could see the Princess Ena with a facility he would not have been able to obtain anywhere else.

It was there that the betrothal took place at last in the month of the September following, and thence also Queen Marie Christine journeyed in haste to see for the first time her future daughter-in-law. She was charmed at first glance by Princess Ena's unaffected simplicity, and was, moreover, delighted to renew her friendship with the Princess Beatrice, whom she had

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not met since that other journey of hers to Biarritz, when she had come to the famous watering-place to pay her respects to Queen Victoria. The two ladies were delighted to find themselves together again, and after some amount of discussion it was finally settled that the marriage of King Alphonso with the Princess Ena was to take place in the following May at Madrid.

Thus culminated a romance in which the whole of Europe had been deeply interested, and which, like a fairy tale, finished in joy and in prosperity. The new Queen of Spain excited the deepest admiration among her subjects from the first moment that they set their eyes on her blonde beauty; and she also contrived to make herself popular amidst her own family, who appreciated the charms of the young English girl who had brought such an atmosphere of joy and of merriment into their austere home. The grave mouth of Queen Marie Christine learned to smile once more when she gazed at her bright daughter-in-law, and listened to her soft laugh and buoyant spirits, which life might in time subdue but would never sadden entirely. And when one little child after another came to add new joys to the Royal home, which for such a long time had stood empty and forlorn, the Dowager Queen felt that she had nothing left to wish for in a life which had never known so much joy, as from the day when her impetuous boy had brought to gladden it the beautiful, lovely and loving English girl he had wooed and won on the shores of the grey Atlantic Ocean.

It was but natural that this marriage of the King

GERMAN DISPLEASURE

of Spain with a niece of King Edward should have displeased the Emperor William and German politicians, who would have liked Alphonso to wed an Austrian archduchess, whose advent at the Court of Madrid would have meant good relations with Vienna and with Berlin. They felt that in a certain sense this union was an insult to them, and that it meant they would never be able to dictate to Madrid the conduct which they required the Spanish Government to follow. This wedding was a checkmate to them, and they did not like it, nor did they relish the frequent visits which the young Spanish sovereigns used to make to London and to the Isle of Wight. Above everything else, they dreaded the influence that King Edward, through Queen Victoria Eugénie, might acquire over the decisions of the Spanish Court. They were clever enough to understand that in regard to future complications in Europe this union had had an enormous political importance, perhaps even greater than had the marriage of King Carlos of Portugal with the eldest daughter of the Comte de Paris, the Princess Amélie of Orleans.

The Portugal match was also one where, in spite of all that was written about it, personal affection had a greater part than politics, though the well-known ambition of the Orleans dynasty justified this judgment of the crowd. But in spite of this fact, politics came to play a considerable part in it in after years, when the Sovereign of Portugal found himself in conflict with his people, and was supposed to be encouraged in the attitude which he assumed by the influence of the Queen, who, after having been loved by the

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population of Lisbon like few women have ever been, became disliked and hated with an intensity which even her misfortunes did not diminish, and which every imprudent step made by her son Don Manuel helped to increase. The life of Amélie is perhaps one of the saddest which history has ever had to register. A stranger in a strange land, she was at first worshipped by its inhabitants and then, through no fault of hers, she saw her husband and her son murdered under her own eyes ; she found herself driven into exile, and reduced to lead a wandering, hopeless, and cheerless existence. She has not even the consolation of seeing little children cluster around her knee, or of hearing the patter of their small feet running in the corridors of the house where she has found refuge, and where, it is to be feared, she will have to end her days in solitary grandeur, with no other comfort than to be able to think that she always did her duty, no matter in what position she was placed.

Queen Amélie of Portugal is perhaps the most unfortunate sovereign of modern times. She has been disappointed in everything that she has undertaken : thwarted in her affections for her parents, for her sisters and brothers, for her husband, and for her children. It is no secret that the conduct of King Manuel has been the source of much sorrow to his mother, and that it is only lately that he has begun to look upon things with more serious attention than was the case before his marriage.

That marriage of Don Manuel also belongs to the category of those events which have given rise to

KING MANUEL

a considerable amount of gossip. For some years after his flight from Portugal he travelled about and tried to spend his time in the pleasantest manner possible, but not in one calculated to win for him the respect of the Portuguese nation. His mother used to implore him to get married, if only from the dynastic point of view, which required him to have an heir to his pretensions and to his rights. The young King did not take kindly to the idea, which he resisted as long as he found it possible to do so. But at last the leaders of the Royalist party at Lisbon sent one of their adherents to the Dowager Queen, and begged her to explain to her son that they made it a condition to any movement they might attempt in his favour that he should take to himself a wife, as the birth of an heir was indispensable to the consolidation of the pretensions of the House of Braganza to the Crown of Portugal.

Thus forced to act, Don Manuel started on a journey to Germany, where he hoped to find a suitable consort, willing to associate herself with his precarious chances and ambitions. This was no easy matter to accomplish, as his racy reputation had preceded him everywhere. Even the daughters of the Archduke Frederick of Austria refused to have anything to do with him, and yet they were supposed to be extremely desirous of snatching the first chance that offered of leaving their mother, with whom their relations were not of the very best. Manuel met with a succession of rebuffs wherever he showed himself, and at last returned to London, where he explained

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to Queen Amélie that it had been quite impossible for him to comply with her wishes and those of his partisans.

Great consternation followed upon his announcement, and the Queen took to her bed, so upset did she feel at this bitter disappointment to all her hopes. It was at this juncture that Cardinal Netto, the former Patriarch of Lisbon, came to the rescue, and made to Don Manuel and to his mother a proposition which pleased them both exceedingly. The Braganzas had relations in Germany, the sister of Don Luis, the grandfather of King Manuel, the Infanta Maria Antonia, having married the Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern—the head of this illustrious House, or, rather, of the Roman Catholic branch of it—who resided at the castle of Sigmaringen. She had had several children, and her eldest son had wedded the daughter of the Countess of Trani, the sister of the Empress Elisabeth of Austria. She had died from consumption a few years after her marriage, leaving two sons and one daughter—the Princess Augusta Victoria, who was twenty-three years old, not exactly pretty, but attractive, intelligent, admirably well brought up, and whose family connections were unimpeachable; who, moreover, was related to the House of Braganza, and might feel more inclined to share the fortunes of its young chief than a woman to whom he was a perfect stranger. Don Manuel sighed, but recognised the wisdom of the advice which was being proffered, and consented at last to a visit to his cousin the Prince of Hohenzollern, during which he would have an opportunity to become acquainted with the Princess Augusta Victoria.

A SENSIBLE AFFAIR

The visit proved a success, inasmuch as the two young people grew to like each other well enough to risk the adventure of a marriage which, at all events, was a most suitable one for both parties. Don Manuel's fiancée was a most reasonable person, who, perhaps because she did not expect much either from life or from the husband whom she was to marry, had got more chances of happiness than would have been the case with a romantic and affectionate girl who looked for something else in life than a good establishment. She accepted the position of an exiled Queen, and being heiress to a lot of money of her own, besides the large fortune which Don Manuel had been able to save from the disaster in which his crown had been lost, she fully meant to shape a most agreeable existence for herself in the English home whither her husband intended to take her after their marriage.

I am using purposely the word "intended," because many months passed before the new Queen could undertake the journey. A sudden and rather mysterious disease struck her at Munich a few days after her marriage, and obliged her to enter a private nursing home, where she spent several weeks, after which she had to convalesce at her father's home at Sigmaringen. The occurrence gave rise to numerous and most ill-natured comments on the part of the public—comments that proved most untrue, because as soon as she was cured the young wife of King Manuel started together with him for England, where they settled in a lovely old house called Fulwell Park, at Twickenham, in the suburbs of London, which they had rented for

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a number of years. Ever since they have been living there, going about in a quiet way amongst their numerous friends, Don Manuel seems to have given up the nonsense to which he had been addicted before his marriage, whilst the Queen has become fond of the country and of the new surroundings amidst which she found herself called upon to live. Husband and wife get on very well together, but their marriage so far has remained childless, and the House of Braganza still lacks an heir.

CHAPTER IX

DENMARK AND ITS ALLIANCES

THE Royal House of Denmark is perhaps the one whose marriages have had the greatest influence on the course of European politics, thanks to the great authority which both the late King Christian IX. and his accomplished and clever wife, Queen Louise, acquired over their numerous sons-in-law, nephews, children, and grandchildren, and to the wise advice which they gave to them, and which the recipients of it knew how to appreciate and to respect. It is quite likely that if the King had been living at the present moment the terrible war which is desolating the world would have been avoided. The old monarch's voice would have had a deciding weight in the difficult questions which so unexpectedly cropped up during 1914. It is even probable that he would have found a way to smooth them down without recurring to the force of arms, and thus have spared to humanity the wholesale massacres which have desolated so many homes and hearts.

The position occupied by the Royal pair who sat for over forty years upon the throne of Denmark had been quite an exclusive one, and this is the more to be wondered at, as no one had believed when Prince

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Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksbourg, according to the treaty concluded in London on May 8th, 1852, had been recognised as heir to the Danish Crown that he would prove anything but a most insignificant sovereign. It is most likely that this consideration had had a deal to do with the unanimity with which all the Great Powers agreed in the suggestion that he would be the right and proper person to put in this position. King Christian, however, did not in the least intend to remain in a secondary place. He, and perhaps his Queen even more, were most ambitious, and, understanding very well that they could never—owing to the position of Denmark in general—aspire to rise to a prominent place among European monarchs, determined nevertheless to control the politics of the world through their children, and the marriages which the latter would make, or the dignities they might attain.

In this important matter, as in so many others, both the King and the Queen gave ample proofs of the diplomatic talents which they possessed in such a remarkable degree. They were perfectly aware that their daughters had better chances to make brilliant matches if it were thought that Denmark would never attempt to mix itself up with the foreign affairs of other countries; and also that their dynasty in the eyes of all the shrewd politicians who controlled the chancelleries of Paris, London, Petersburg, and Vienna had the advantage of appearing perfectly harmless, at least so far as regarded the family connections which it had at that time. They made up their minds to go on pre-

A SPLENDID CONSORT

serving a modest attitude until the moment when their daughters would be established and the future of their sons assured.

The first member of their family to leave their home for one of her own was the Princess Alexandra, whom fate took to London, where she made herself so beloved by the people over whom she was one day to reign. The marriage of the then Prince of Wales with the daughter of Prince Christian of Holstein, as he still was at that time, was immensely popular in the United Kingdom, and she was welcomed when she first landed on British shores with a burst of enthusiasm such as England had not witnessed for a long time. She was lovely, sweet, good, amiable, and as tactful as her parents. She understood to perfection how to be gracious to all with whom she came into contact, and she made herself beloved everywhere she showed herself. Princess Alexandra realised the complicated problem of keeping the affections of the nation she had come to rule at the same level all through the fifty odd years she has lived amongst it, and never once during that whole time has a single voice been heard in disparagement of her, or the slightest criticism raised as to any of her sayings or her doings.

Whilst the negotiations concerning her marriage were still going on, a further important matter concerning another child of the future King and Queen of Denmark was raised by European diplomacy. The revolution that had taken place in Greece had obliged the sovereign of that realm, Otto of Bavaria, to return

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to his native land. Greece found herself without a king, and after much talk, and a good many tergiversations, the Greek National Assembly, after having vainly tried to obtain as its Sovereign the second son of Queen Victoria, the Duke of Edinburgh, offered its Crown to Prince William of Denmark, the brother of the Princess of Wales. The Great Powers interested in the Greek question having given their assent to this choice in London on June 5th, 1863, the young prince was recognised as King of the Hellenes under the name of George I. He started for his new country in October of the same year, bringing as a present to his people the Ionian Islands, which England had consented to retrocede to Greece by one of the articles of the treaty which had been concluded at the time this important matter—the influence of which was to extend itself to the whole of the Near East, was finally settled to the general satisfaction of all the interested parties in the question, Turkey included.

King George was but eighteen years old when he set his foot upon the historic shores of his new kingdom. Before he started he received some very good advice from his father, and was promised by his mother that as soon as his position had become more or less settled she would occupy herself with the important question of his marriage, and find for him a bride whose family connections would strengthen his situation and contribute to his popularity among his people.

When the wise Queen spoke like that she was already dreaming about an alliance which would unite her son with the Romanoffs even more closely than

FATE STEPS IN

her House was already, because, in the meanwhile, the Princess Dagmar, the second daughter of the Royal pair, had become engaged to the Heir to the Crown of All the Russias. Whilst negotiations were going on between the Greek National Assembly, and the Royal House of Denmark, several events had occurred which had considerably added to the importance of the Danish Royal Family in Europe. For one thing, the old King of Denmark had died, and the father of the young Princess of Wales and of the newly elected Sovereign of the Hellenes had replaced him upon the throne of that country. The engagement of Princess Dagmar made King Christian the father-in-law of the future sovereigns of the two greatest Empires in the world—at that time no one thought about the grandeur of Germany—and it thus gave him an entry into the inner circle of higher politics and a certain sense of influence with each in the future—a fact which he keenly appreciated. When, a few months later, the Grand Duke Cesarevitch sickened and died at Nice, beyond his own mother and the unfortunate Princess Dagmar no one mourned for him more sincerely than the sovereigns who had expected to become his parents-in-law, and who saw thus disappear all their plans for the future as well as all their honest ambitions, which, in justice to them, must be confessed were all directed towards the maintenance of peace and of harmony in Europe.

It is not to be remarked upon, therefore, that when friends began hinting that it would be possible to renew the links which had been so rudely snapped

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asunder, and that the possibility of a Russian establishment for the Princess Dagmar had not altogether vanished, both the King and the Queen of Denmark caught eagerly at the idea, and declared themselves quite willing to see it mature. Eighteen months went by in that way, and at last their hopes were realised and their daughter was wedded to the future Tsar.

The marriage turned out an ideally happy one, and proved yet again the wisdom of those who had planned it. It contributed largely to the peace of the world, and laid the foundations of the present Anglo-French and Russian understanding, which, but for the influence exercised by the old King of Denmark over his sons-in-law and daughters, might not have been concluded so soon, nor under such favourable conditions.

When Princess Dagmar settled in her new home, her mother bethought herself again of the promise which she had made to her younger son, and she enlisted his sister's sympathies in the cause she wanted to plead. The Grand Duke Constantine Nicolaievitch had a daughter, the Grand Duchess Olga, who was reputed to be one of the most beautiful women in Europe. She had barely reached her sixteenth year, but had already been asked in marriage by more than one German prince eager to ally himself to the mighty Tsar of All the Russias. It was towards this Princess that the thoughts of the Queen of Denmark had turned, feeling sure that a union between the King of Greece and a lady who professed the Greek Orthodox faith would be most popular among the Hellenes, who, moreover,

ADVANTAGEOUS ALLIANCES

would hail with joy the advent in their midst of a niece of the Russian Emperor. Her presence at Athens would ensure to the new Greek kingdom the powerful protection of Russia.

The Queen of Denmark therefore applied all her energies to bring it about, and begged of her daughter also to do all that she could to induce Alexander II. to look with favourable eyes upon such an alliance. The Princess Dagmar—or rather the Grand Duchess Marie Feodorovna, for such was the name under which she was henceforward to be known—was all too glad to help her mother. Since her arrival in Russia she had become warmly attached to the lovely and accomplished Princess whose hand was sought in marriage by her brother. She therefore pleaded his cause before the Emperor, and was genuinely delighted when he gave his assent to this alliance. Ever since the happy event took place she has remained on terms of the most tender intimacy with the new Queen of the Hellenes, who on her side reciprocated her affection with all her heart, and whose warm sympathy and tenderness never failed her in after life, and stood beside her during its most cruel moments, when she lost the husband she loved so dearly.

Two years after the King of Greece and the beautiful Olga Constantinovna had married, his eldest brother, the Crown Prince of Denmark, also took to himself a wife. It was, like those of his sisters and of King George, an alliance which the Queen Louise had long since prepared, and which brought considerable advantages. His bride was the only daughter of King Charles of

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Sweden and Norway and of a Princess of Nassau, who was heiress to a fortune of several millions, and considered one of the best matches in Europe. It was an alliance which was popular all over the Scandinavian peninsula, and which brought considerable happiness to the two young people who contracted it. The new Crown Princess made herself quickly at home in Denmark and amidst her husband's family, and she became in a short time almost as dear to her parents-in-law as their own daughters. Children also arrived in quick succession to add the joy of their presence to their house, and the old Queen could rejoice with all her heart as she listened to their innocent prattle, and in her mind made more than one plan concerning the future of these small mites.

After the Princesses Alexandra and Dagmar and the Crown Prince and his brother had married there were left in the Royal home of Denmark the Princess Thyra and Prince Waldemar, who for a considerable number of years remained near their parents, and about whose future the match-making Queen did not like to trouble too much, because she did not care for the thought of losing them and seeing them established far away from her. There happened a time, however, when people began to wonder why the Princess Thyra had already reached her twenty-fifth year and had not yet been provided with a husband. She had had more than one suitor, but had always rejected their offers; and though rumour had associated her name with almost every marriageable prince in Europe, she did not seem to show the slightest inclination for matri-

A SURPRISE ENGAGEMENT

mony. At one time her name was freely coupled with that of the Prince Imperial of France, who during a visit which he had paid to Copenhagen had been the recipient of much courtesy and great cordiality on the part of the Royal family. At last the Official Gazette of Copenhagen announced that an engagement had taken place between the Princess Thyra and the Pretender to the Hanoverian throne, the Duke of Cumberland.

At first the news did not please the Danish people, and provoked also considerable surprise amidst diplomatic circles in Europe. Some wonder was expressed how it became possible that a prudent man like King Christian IX. should have consented to give his youngest daughter to a prince whose position was anything but assured, and who was virtually an exile deprived of home and of fortune. In reality the marriage was far more advantageous than the world imagined. The Duke of Cumberland, besides being a very nice man, and deeply in love with the young princess he had been lucky enough to win, was enormously rich in spite of the confiscated millions, which, by the way, were ultimately returned to him, partly through the good offices of the King of Denmark. He lived in a beautiful castle near Ischl, owning as well a splendid palace at Vienna and the most magnificent family jewels that any Royal House could boast. The old and wise King remembered also that his own sons-in-law were powerful enough to help the latest addition to their ranks to recover his forfeited properties, and to be of use to him in the matter of the inheritance of the

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Duchy of Brunswick, to which he stood the next in succession.

When all these different reasons were taken into consideration the marriage was not such a bad one after all, even for the sister-in-law of the future Tsar of Russia and the future King of England. The wedding took place at Copenhagen in December, 1878. It established an exception to the rule which had prevailed until then in the Danish Royal House; and the new Duchess of Cumberland, instead of joining the family circle which gathered together every summer at the castles of Fredensborg or of Bernstorff, made but rare appearances there. She soon discovered that her husband was loath to see her leave her Austrian home more often than was absolutely necessary, and therefore seldom made excursions abroad.

Her youngest daughter being thus settled in life and all her children well established, Queen Louise found that she could rest for some time on her matrimonial laurels. Her last boy, it is true, remained unmarried, but there was ample time to look for a wife for him, so she did not trouble much concerning him, with the consequence that one fine day a surprise for which she was but little prepared was sprung upon her as he came to confide to her that he had fallen in love with the daughter of the Duc de Chartres, the Princess Marie of Orleans.

Neither the King nor the Queen had ever given a thought to the possibility of such an alliance, and for the first few moments they were literally staggered at the idea of the complications which might arise. Then

MARIE OF ORLEANS

their sound common sense came to their rescue, and they realised the many advantages which this union might bring along with it. Princess Marie possessed a charming character and also a considerable fortune, to which, upon her marriage, her uncle, the Duc d'Aumale, added a large sum, so overjoyed did he feel at this entrance of his niece into the most select family circle in the whole of Europe.

At the last moment the marriage was nearly broken off on account of the religious question. The Princess belonged to the Catholic faith, which does not admit of any compromise in regard to the bringing up of children in mixed marriages, and insists upon their being christened according to its own rites. On the other hand, it would have been inadmissible for members of the Danish Royal Family to be anything else but Protestants. None of the interested parties would give way, and it seemed at a certain moment as if the whole affair would crumble to pieces. It was at this juncture that Queen Louise interfered, and with her usual tact found a solution to what seemed at first insurmountable difficulties. She suggested a compromise, and proposed to arrange matters so that if any sons were born of the marriage they should be baptised Protestants, whilst the daughters would be allowed to follow their mother's faith. This seemed to satisfy everybody except the ultramontane parties in France, about whose opinions no one troubled in the very least, and the Princess Marie of Orleans was at last united to Prince Waldemar of Denmark in the private chapel of the Castle of Eu in Normandy, in

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presence of the King and Queen of Denmark, of the Princess of Wales, and of the Empress of Russia, who had travelled to France for the occasion.

The unexpected happens sometimes in Royal life. This marriage, which at first seemed to have nothing to do with politics, was destined to bring about the most important political consequences of modern times. The Princess Marie, bright, intelligent, and keenly, delicately clever, very soon made for herself quite an exclusive position in Denmark. She fascinated everyone who met her, won from the very first day of her arrival in Copenhagen the heart of her mother-in-law, and soon made herself indispensable to all her family. She became the personal friend of the Tsar, Alexander III., who, though he hated to talk politics in general, and to discuss them with women in particular, liked to do so during his conversations with his sister-in-law. They used to go out for long walks together during the yearly sojourns which the Tsar made at the Court of Copenhagen, and he found it a great relaxation amidst his busy life to be able to speak freely about all the things that he liked or disliked with the bright and merry French princess, who, in her turn, entertained a warm feeling of affection combined with the deepest respect for the mighty Sovereign, whose whole existence seemed to be taken up by his desire to be the father to his people he had said he would strive to be on the day he ascended the throne.

She entertained him with her own love for the land of her birth, and used her best endeavours to persuade him to think with favour upon the possibility of a

THE GATHERING STORM

Franco-Russian alliance which might eventually prove a checkmate to German ambitions and German appetites. Alexander had refused to entertain the idea when it was at first suggested to him by the great Russian publicist Michael Katkoff, but the knowledge of this did not deter the Princess from once more enunciating the advantages which would accrue from such an understanding.

These annual family gatherings in the neighbourhood of the Danish capital were productive of several important events. It was due to their recurrence that the early ambitions and dreams of King Christian IX. and of Queen Louise began to be realised. The Danish King and Queen were both held in high esteem by the Tsar, who, feeling certain that the parents of his wife would never advise him badly, often consulted them in various matters, and especially about those concerning the growing power of Germany, which already at that time was beginning to cast the shadow of menace over Europe by reason of her considerable armaments. The Emperor Alexander, who understood better than any other man in his vast dominions the dangers which lay in store for Russia if German power were allowed to expand in the manner that it had done during recent years, had pondered for a considerable time on the possibility of ending this peril, or at least upon minimising its potentialities. From the first the Triple Alliance had appeared to him to be what it was in reality—a means to bring the rest of humanity under the heel of German omnipotence. On the other hand, Alexander III. hated everything that savoured of

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revolution, and he had not been able to reconcile himself to the French Republic, the very name of which reminded him of the bloodiest pages of the great Revolution, and of the scaffold of Louis XVI. It became the task of the Princess Marie to explain to him that the Republic, as it was at the time they were speaking, had nothing in common with that abominable coalition of lawless ruffians which had murdered in cold blood so many innocent people and displayed the red flag as its ensign. France, which had hitherto been a sealed book to Alexander III., became better understood by him through the descriptions which his sister-in-law gave him of its beauties, and the explanations which she made concerning the character of its population. At last he consented to think about the possibility of co-operating with France in some action against Prussian militarism, and of concluding an alliance or at least of coming to an understanding the weight of which would effectually reduce the efforts of the Austro-German entente.

King Christian was not sorry to see his son-in-law become suspicious of the sincerity of the feelings of friendship which Germany continually assured him that she entertained towards Russia. Christian IX. hated Prussia too, and disliked even more Prussian ways, Prussian duplicity, and Prussian methods of government; for Prussian hypocrisy he entertained a profound disgust. He therefore applied all his personal efforts to help forward those which the Princess Marie was making to bring about an understanding between Russia, France, and Great Britain. He found an

CHRISTIAN OF DENMARK

unexpected ally in this task in the person of King Edward VII., who ever since the Franco-German War had been distrustful of Prussia and of the policy of Bismarck, and who fully intended to do his best to arrange an alliance between Russia, France, and Great Britain as soon as he would find himself in a position to further it.

It is impossible to gainsay that during the lifetime of King Christian of Denmark, and especially during that of Queen Louise, the Danish Government exercised a considerable amount of power in Europe. Whenever a political complication arose, diplomacy turned its glances towards Copenhagen, whence they confidently looked to come the solution of all difficulties which tended to disturb the peace of Europe. The King was perfectly aware of the importance which he had acquired in chancelleries such as Vienna, Paris, Berlin, and London, and it amused him exceedingly to be able to guide the destinies of so many nations without their peoples suspecting that this was the case.

It was principally for this reason that he encouraged all his family to spend their vacations at Copenhagen, and that he tried to make the holiday exceedingly pleasant to them in every possible way. By and by, especially as Alexander III. openly expressed the feelings of extreme reverence for his father-in-law, Copenhagen became the greatest centre of European politics, and was recognised to be the spot where its inmost intricacies were known, and where the secret, or not secret, treaties between the different Great Powers of the Continent were carefully weighed and

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examined long before their contents had become public property. It was an acknowledged fact that the Tsar consulted the King of Denmark upon all grave resolutions he found himself called upon to make. It was also common knowledge that of all the things that Prince Bismarck had the most dreaded during the days of his power in Prussia, the chief one was the possible enmity of Christian IX. in regard to his schemes.

When Alexander III. died so prematurely, the influence of the Danish Court did not come to an end. On the contrary, it assumed a greater importance, because, the one man against whom he had never dared to make a stand being removed from the scene of the politics of the world, the German Emperor, William II., applied himself suddenly to win the good graces of Christian IX., and rendered himself so pleasant during the short stay which he made at Copenhagen that the old King consented at last to accept the earnest invitation which had been proffered to him so many times in succession by the impetuous ruler of Germany, and, in his turn, visited Berlin for a few hours. It ought, however, to be remarked that when this happened Queen Louise had been dead some years, as it is to be questioned whether she would have consented to accompany her husband had she still been alive. Apart from his desire to stand well with some of his brother sovereigns who did not look upon him with over-lenient eyes, William II. had got another aim in view when he tried to ingratiate himself into the good graces of the Danish Court. He

DANISH INFLUENCE

was already thinking about the possibility of a Brunswick marriage for his only daughter, and in view of this he desired to cultivate good relations with the parents and all the relatives of the Duchess Thyra of Cumberland. Perhaps also he wished to have an opportunity to persuade them that in reality he did not cherish the bad intentions against the peace of the world with which he was already credited.

One fact remained certain, and that was that no one in Germany understood better than did the Emperor the importance of remaining on good terms with Copenhagen. When Queen Victoria died, William II. became even more anxious than he had ever been before to stand upon excellent terms with the Danish Sovereigns, whom the consort of the new British Sovereign continued to visit every summer, and where she had the opportunity to meet her sister, the Dowager Empress of Russia, whose influence was just as strong over the mind of her son as it had been over her husband's. Strangely enough, all the events that have led to the present war, and the war itself, have not been able to change the attitude of the German Sovereign in regard to Denmark, and well-informed people affirm that the present King is so well aware of this fact that he has already taken advantage of it to make his voice heard in the cause of peace. Christian X., together with his consort and his mother, the Dowager Queen Louise, are believed to have approached Berlin with a view also of trying to persuade the Emperor to conduct the war in a more humane manner. It is easy for them to try to do so, because the present

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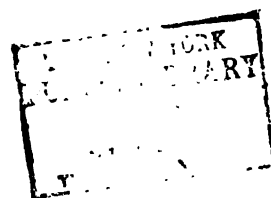
Queen of Denmark, being the sister of the German Crown Princess, is in a position to tell the latter some home truths which she would refuse to listen to from anyone else.

Queen Alexandrine is an amiable creature. Her marriage was one of the last joys granted to old Queen Louise of Denmark. She was the daughter of the Grand Duke Frederick Francis of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and of that magnificent Grand Duchess Anastasia Michailovna of Russia, with whose sayings and doings the gay world, that gathers during winter on the sunny shores of the Mediterranean, had occupied itself so much and so often in years gone by. Princess Alexandrine was married at Cannes one beautiful spring morning, quite simply and without fuss, amidst an intimate circle of relatives and friends who gathered around her to wish her joy. The union was entirely a love affair ; politics had nothing to do with it, though, owing to the rare luck which generally attended all the alliances of the Royal House of Denmark, it was also one which conferred all the advantages that the ambitious heart of the old Queen, the grandmother of the happy bridegroom, could have wished for him. The Princess Alexandrine of Mecklenburg arrived in Denmark a few weeks after her wedding with Prince Christian, and received from the population of Copenhagen a grand welcome. She brought all the brightness of her joyous youth to the old palaces of the Danish Sovereigns, and soon made herself a favourite with both the King and the Queen. Unfortunately, the latter did not live long to enjoy the sight of her grandson's happiness,



Photo: H. Paetz, Copenhagen

THE ROYAL FAMILY OF DENMARK



THE COURT CHANGES

because death carried her away in the month of September following upon the marriage.

When Queen Louise died a gloom settled over Amalienborg and Fredensborg. The King became morose and sad, and though his daughters did all they could to cheer up his solitude, he never entirely recovered from the blow, and the pleasant family gatherings that used to take place every summer in Copenhagen came to an end. Christian IX. died in 1906, and three years later death took away his talented daughter-in-law, the consort of Prince Waldemar, Princess Marie of Orleans. Everything changed at the Danish Court, and it changes still. In 1912 King Frederick VIII. expired in his turn, and the young Queen Alexandrine is now reigning in the place of her husband's mother and grandmother. But in spite of her relative inexperience she has quickly become imbued with the traditions of her House, and tries through her own family connections to continue exercising the influence wielded in past days by King Christian IX. and by Queen Louise. She is especially overjoyed whenever Queen Alexandra or the Empress Marie arrive at their villa of Hvidore, where she visits them almost daily. She has some Russian blood on her own mother's side, and has kept on affectionate terms with her relatives outside of the family. It must be added that in her desire to imitate Queen Louise, whom she literally worshipped in everything, she also has become affected by the old Queen's propensity for marriage-making, and likes to have a hand in all the important Royal weddings that take place.

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She contributed to that of her cousin, the son of the Duchess of Cumberland, with the Princess Victoria Louise of Prussia, and it was a subject of current gossip in Berlin that it was partly through her interference that the strong opposition which the Crown Prince of Germany made to his sister's wedding, and especially to the recognition of Prince Ernest Augustus as Duke of Brunswick, gave way at last.

If one is to believe all that one hears, Queen Alexandrine would feel most happy if circumstances proved favourable to an alliance between her eldest son, the present Crown Prince of Denmark, and one of the younger daughters of her cousin the Tsar. Such an alliance would bring to her house a princess who, of all those whom her boy could marry, would be the one that Denmark would acclaim with the greatest joy.

CHAPTER X

SAXONY AND OTHER GERMAN COURTS

AMONG the greatest scandals that ever occurred in any Royal House, the one caused by the flight of the Crown Princess of Saxony from her home was perhaps the most terrible. Stories without number have been written concerning it, and yet it is to be doubted whether the whole truth of its details has ever been given to the world, in spite of the famous memoirs which the heroine of it was induced, very foolishly indeed, to publish. In order to understand well the causes that led to the culminating act, it is necessary to take things from their very beginning and to say a few words about the father and mother of the unfortunate Princess Louise—the Archduke Ferdinand of Tuscany, and his consort, the Archduchess Alice of Bourbon Parma.

Archduke Ferdinand—who was familiarly called by his family and, indeed, by the whole Imperial House of Habsburg, “Uncle Nando”—was one of those men who, if they had been born common mortals, would have been considered perfect fools. As he happened to have in his veins some of the bluest blood in Europe, and moreover had been a sovereign, if only for a moment, he had managed to find people who did not

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see the insufficiency which his character, as well as his general appearance, presented; who, when looking at him, remembered only that he was a descendant of Marie Thérèse, and that he had been a Grand Duke of Tuscany.

In no country in the world is there so much toadying to Royalty, and in general to titled people, as there is in Austria. Having the good fortune to live in that country, Ferdinand IV., as he styled himself, seeing that so many people acclaimed the stupidities which he continually uttered, imagined that he was a clever man, and insisted on his opinions being heard and listened to. His temper was abominable, and he ill-treated his wife, a sweet but eminently insignificant creature, who had been told to marry him by her aunt, the Comtesse de Chambord.

This aunt had taken charge of the education of Princess Alice after her mother's death, and considered that a princess ought never to be allowed to wed otherwise than with the man selected for her by those who were responsible for her welfare. The Princess Alice was educated, therefore, according to the principles prevalent at the Court of Modena, the most bigoted and intolerant in Europe. She had never been allowed to know the pleasures of the world, the very mention of which sent a shudder through the frame of the Comtesse de Chambord. So that, when the Princess was told that a marriage had been arranged for her with the Grand Duke of Tuscany, she submitted with resignation to this change in her daily existence, and did not even dare to hint that this husband with

A DUTIFUL WIFE

whom she was going to be saddled was about fifteen years older than herself—ugly, untidy in his appearance and habits, and blessed with the smallest amount of brains imaginable. She allowed herself to be led to the altar, and after the ceremony, which transformed her into a Grand Duchess of Tuscany without a duchy, she went meekly to live at Salzburg with her husband, and for the next few years remained in the old Imperial castle there, which had been placed at the disposal of the Tuscan family by the Emperor Francis Joseph. At Salzburg the Grand Duchess Alice led an existence encompassed with much state and ceremony, in which the principal occupations consisted in going to church every morning and having a child every year.

The Grand Duke was constantly surrounded by priests, and made several Jesuit Fathers his principal advisers, who helped to keep him in an atmosphere of sacristy, and never allowed the rumours of the outside world to reach him, far less his young wife. The latter had not enough character to rebel. She honestly believed that she would go straight to hell if she omitted to conform to the prescriptions of the Church and to the commands of her husband. It has been related that the Grand Duke having objected to her taking a bath every day, and having declared that it was quite sufficient if she did so once a week, the young Grand Duchess, after having shed a good many tears at this strange order, never had the courage to disobey it, nor to dare enter into her tub without a curious grey flannel garment which the Grand Duke had had specially made for her, and in which she was

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to envelop herself entirely before she had permission to bathe.

It can be imagined that a woman blessed with so little strength of character, and of such small independence, would not be able to bring up her children otherwise than in the same narrow-minded spirit in which her own education had been conducted. The little archdukes and archduchesses were given tutors and governesses carefully selected by the Jesuit Fathers who ruled the household of Ferdinand of Tuscany. The young people grew up to manhood and to womanhood neglected and left to their own devices; they only saw their mother at stated hours, and mostly during the religious services which they had to attend several times a day, and when they had to receive lessons from outside masters, someone from the Court was always present. One morning a tutor, who had to instruct the princesses in history, having dared say that in spite of his revolt against the authority of the Church Luther was a great man, he was instantly dismissed by the Grand Duke, who, on hearing what he had told his pupils, ordered him to be turned out of his house there and then, and advised to go immediately to confession, so as not to incur the risk of dying whilst in a state of mortal sin.

In spite of all these precautions—perhaps on account of them—the daughters of the Grand Duke and Duchess of Tuscany managed to get very good information as to what was really going on in the world, and contrived to read books the mere mention of which would have sent their father into a fit. The eldest girl especi-

NARROW CHILDHOOD

ally, the Princess Louise, whose character was entirely different from that of her sisters, and who, from her earliest childhood, had shown symptoms of an independence previously unknown in the Tuscan family, succeeded in reading most of the books of which she saw mention in the newspapers and reviews. These books, with the connivance of one of her maids, she obtained from the public library of Salzburg. She had not, of course, thoroughly digested them, never having been guided in her studies; but in spite of her only giving attention to the subjects which interested her, her knowledge far exceeded that of either her parents or those about her.

When Louise was old enough to go out into society she was taken to Vienna and presented at Court, where it seems the Empress Elisabeth grew fond of her, and treated her with much kindness, whilst her cousin, the Crown Prince Rudolph, amused himself by initiating her into many things which hitherto had remained a sealed book to her. It was not quite to her advantage or profit that she fell under the influence of this unfortunate young man, who most certainly imbued her with some of his own ideas and with his personal spirit of revolt, which she very soon came, more or less, to share—rather more than less. Several offers were made to her, but none of them had qualifications pleasing to her parents, who wished before everything else to see their daughter enter a family circle just as pious as their own had always been, and where they would feel sure that her soul would be well cared for. As for her body, this was an entirely secondary

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thing, while her intelligence was never taken into account.

There was at that time living at the Court of Vienna a Princess of Saxony, the niece of King Albert, who was married to the Archduke Otto, the heir to the throne of the Habsburgs after his brother, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. She was an excellent woman, full of noble qualities, who had sought and found in the strict observance of religious practices a consolation for the misfortunes of a conjugal existence during which she was subjected to the most disgraceful treatment on the part of a husband who was notorious in Vienna and, indeed, all over Austria. The Archduchess Marie Josepha took a liking to the young girl who was making her *début* in society, and planned to take her out of surroundings which she felt were entirely uncongenial to her, and to find her a husband. Her own brother—who in due time would inherit the kingdom of Saxony—was in search of a wife, and she wrote to her father and to her uncle that her brother could not do better than wed the eldest daughter of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

The Archduchess was a person whose opinions were considered as commands in her family circle, and in answer to her summons Prince Frederick August of Saxony arrived in Vienna, and after a few interviews with the girl whom his sister had advised him to marry, he proposed to her, to the immense joy of her parents, and they were married a few weeks later.

The Princess was delighted to escape from the dull atmosphere of her home at Salzburg, and never

A HARSH FATHER-IN-LAW

hesitated one moment in accepting what was, without doubt, an excellent match.

She had no idea at all of the kind of life which was awaiting her, and thought only of the moment when she would become Queen of Saxony, and would be able to preside over a Court of her own, which, she promised herself, she would make one of the most entertaining and attractive in Europe.

Alas for these hopes ! The young Archduchess was no sooner in Dresden than she found herself encompassed by the rules of an etiquette almost as bad—if not worse—than the one which prevailed at the Hofburg. Though she was the second lady in the land, and only the good-natured Queen Carola had the right to precede her, she very quickly had to recognise that it would be quite impossible for her to do what she liked, or to stand against the rules which, since time immemorial, had been prevalent at the Saxon Court. Though she had no mother-in-law, she found herself confronted by something infinitely worse—a father-in-law who had an iron will, and who, if possible, was even more under the influence of the Jesuits than her own father had been. She was expected to conform to all the petty customs and wishes of a man who was stupid to a degree, as events proved subsequently, who also had no code of honour, few gentlemanly principles, and who only looked on a woman as something quite inferior, whose duties consisted in bringing up in the strict codes of the Church the children she might have ; who had no right to nourish either opinions or ideas of her

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own, whose will was to be subordinated to that of her husband, and whose worst crime would be to experience any kind of feeling of friendship, be it the most innocent, for any other man. Apart from these temperamental idiosyncrasies, Prince Georg of Saxony had also certain ideas as to the state in which a princess ought to live. He expected his daughter-in-law to see no one except people whom he would allow her to receive; to go nowhere save to places of which he approved; and never to dare to show herself in public unless attended by a numerous retinue. All these exigencies made the Princess Louise very miserable, and it is no wonder that she did her best to influence her husband to live outside of Dresden and to see as little as possible of his father, Prince Georg.

King Albert, to whom she might have appealed for protection against the tyranny of an old and bad-tempered man, had never succeeded in winning her confidence, though she had to acknowledge that he had always shown himself most kind in respect to her, and on more than one occasion had even taken her part against her father-in-law. And as for the Queen Carola, she was so insignificant, and so little able to come to the help of anybody, that it is hardly to be wondered that the future Crown Princess considered it worse than useless to apply to her, sure as she was that the only reply that she could get would be to go to church and pray for the patience which she so much needed.

Nevertheless, so long as King Albert lived the position of the Archduchess was more or less tolerable. She

A MISERABLE EXISTENCE

made herself very well liked among the population and the society of Dresden, where she was generally pitied for the restraint Prince Georg of Saxony was putting on all her actions ; and on more than one occasion the mob had cheered her in the streets as she was driving through, whilst it had received in silence, and even with hostility, her father-in-law. Prince Georg had never forgiven her for this insult, which he attributed to her as the prime cause ; and, like all narrow-minded persons, he could show himself very spiteful when he felt he could do so with impunity. As soon as King Albert died King Georg began to sow dissension between his son and daughter-in-law, and instead of trying to win the Princess Louise by kindness he did all that he could to exasperate her and to drive her to seek a separation from the Crown Prince, which would have allowed King Georg to send her back to Vienna, or to her parents, and thus to get rid of a person whom he strongly detested.

Unfortunately for his plans, the Crown Prince—who since 1904 has reigned as King Friedrich August III.—was fond of his wife. She was bright, intelligent, amusing ; she had brought into his dull existence an interest which he had never thought he could experience for anything or anybody, and she had opened new horizons for him. Friedrich was, if less bigoted, just as stupid as his father, of whom he stood in mortal awe ; but he was of a kinder disposition, and not so mean or so spiteful. He fully recognised the real qualities of his wife, but he had not sufficient intelligence or authority over her ardent and passionate

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nature to try to persuade her to resign herself to certain necessities, and to look to the future in order to forget the miseries of the present. And then he also was entirely in the hands of his confessor, with whom the Crown Princess had never been able to get on.

It is a fact that the Jesuits had more to do with the misfortunes of the Princess Louise than had anyone else. They had attempted when she arrived in Dresden to get hold of her and to induce her to become an instrument in their hands; and having failed in the attempt, hated her as only a woman or a priest can hate. It is not surprising, therefore, that when they noticed she was on a footing of hostility with the new ruler they applied themselves to persuade King Georg to banish the rebellious daughter-in-law who had dared set herself in opposition to his wishes, and who had refused to acknowledge his authority.

The Archduchess, in her book of memoirs, has related that when she left Dresden it was under the fear of being put into a madhouse, as the King had threatened to do. Whether this fear was justified or not, it is difficult to say. It is certain that she might have avoided such a fate by sticking to her guns, and insisting on remaining in her palace, appealing for protection, if need be, to the feelings of affection which the Saxon people entertained for her. The King might have hesitated then to afford a pretext for the population of the capital to interfere in favour of the Crown Princess; and it is also likely that if she had taken the trouble to speak earnestly to the Crown Prince, she would have had sufficient authority and

LOCKED OUT

influence over him to compel him to take her part and to leave Dresden together with her, staying abroad until better times had dawned for them both. The Crown Princess, with all her intelligence, was also terribly foolish; she played into the hands of her enemies and allowed them to work upon her feelings until, thoroughly unnerved and terrified, she thought she could do nothing else but run away from a fate that seemed to her to be infinitely worse than death itself.

Now comes the saddest episode in all this sad story. When the Crown Princess of Saxony ran away from her husband and her children, her first instinct was to seek protection from her own parents, and so she started for Salzburg, intending to ask the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Tuscany to take her into their house, and to allow her to remain with them until the death of King Georg would allow her to return to Dresden. But when she arrived at Salzburg she found the doors of the palace closed against her, and she was told by one of the gentlemen of the Grand Duke's Court that she had better return to the station and take the next train, because she would not be allowed to see her parents. In vain did the unfortunate Archduchess beg to be permitted to speak with her mother, so as to explain to her the circumstances which had induced her to seek a refuge in her paternal home; she was only met with the same cold refusal, and when at last she sent a short note to the Grand Duchess imploring her to grant to her a few minutes' interview, she received it back unopened, with a remark added

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on the envelope in the handwriting of her father, in which he absolutely forbade her ever to appeal to him or to her mother again.

The reason that induced the stupid Ferdinand of Tuscany to act with such rigour, and thus to send his own daughter to her destruction, is less difficult to understand when it is stated that the very same morning he had received a long letter from a Jesuit Father, in whom he had great confidence. This priest represented to him that it was his duty after the scandal caused by his daughter's departure from Dresden—which, by the way, was not yet known to the public, and which it would have been quite easy to hide or to explain by the desire of the Princess to spend some time with her father and mother—to renounce her, and to express his public disapproval of a conduct that savoured of insult to the authority of her husband and of her Sovereign.

Ferdinand of Tuscany entered at once into the spirit of this communication, and, after having submitted it to his own confessor, receiving from the latter the assurance that the advice tendered was the right course to take, and that his conscience as a good Catholic could not allow him to act differently, he refused to receive his child, and obliged her to seek a refuge wherever she could, far from those who were her natural protectors and who ought to have stood between her and the calumnies of the world.

The Grand Duke did even more. He wrote to the Emperor Francis Joseph and begged of him to deprive the Archduchess of her title and of her arms and digni-

A RIDICULOUS MANIFESTO

ties, forbidding her to call herself an Imperial Princess of Austria. He thus shut before her every road to rehabilitation, making it equally impossible for her husband to take her back and to forgive her for what, after all, was nothing but an indiscretion which she already repented, and which she would have given much to be able to recall and to repair.

The Emperor Francis Joseph was another short-sighted simpleton, who did not understand that by this action he was throwing dirt into his own face. He fell into the snare and signed the fatal decree which sent as an outcast into the world a woman belonging to his blood and to his race, and thus covered with shame his own person and the whole Royal Family of Saxony, together with the children of the unfortunate Crown Princess. Her father-in-law, King Georg, piled injury upon injury by issuing a ridiculous manifesto to his people, in which he proclaimed publicly his son's dishonour. When one recapitulates all the incidents of this miserable story, one wonders who was the greatest fool in it—the heroine of it, or her husband, or the King her father-in-law, or her own parents, or the man in his dotage who still occupies the throne of Austria.

The Princess Louise, deprived of name, title, position, scorned and forsaken by everybody, found in her misery only one of her brothers to take her part and to stand by her in her heavy trouble. With him she went to Lindau, where a French tutor joined her, it is said, at the suggestion of those who wished to see her disgraced even further than was the case already.

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It was at Lindau that her youngest child, the Princess Monica, was born, and at Lindau, too, took place the different negotiations between her and the Saxon Court in regard to her future position and in regard to the custody of the little girl who was to become the bone of contention in all this miserable and disgraceful strife. At last, thanks, it is related, to the intervention of the Pope, a *modus vivendi* was arranged, and the Princess received the title of Countess di Montignoso, and an allowance sufficient to keep her in comfort, if without luxury.

For a period she disappeared from the notice of the public, and nothing was heard about her except when, some time after the death of King Georg, and her former husband's succession to the throne, she was allowed by him to have an interview with her two eldest sons at Munich, whither also repaired the now widowed Grand Duchess of Tuscany, who was asked to stand by her daughter on this memorable occasion. It was related at the time that this interview with the Crown Prince and his brother was but a prelude to a reconciliation between their mother and the King, who would have been but too willing to take her back and thus to rehabilitate her in the eyes of the world. It certainly would have been the wisest thing she could have done to accede to his request, and all her friends were hoping she would decide to take this most reasonable step and return to Dresden, where it is likely that she would have succeeded in making society forget a moment of madness into which she had been literally goaded, and which led her to fly from the

THE CUP OF SORROW

Court under the protection of a man who deserted her later on. All these hopes vanished, however, when one day the world was startled by the news that the former Crown Princess of Saxony had been married in London to an Italian music-master, a man far removed from her station in life. This man had been but too proud to win for his wife a daughter of the illustrious House of Habsburg and the divorced wife of a king, whilst she, poor woman, had been glamourised by his protestations of affection.

After this last act of madness even the best friends of the Princess Louise felt that they could say nothing in defence of her conduct. She had willingly and with her own hand deliberately slain all the chances of happiness which she had still possessed, and it only remained for her well-wishers to hope and to pray that she might not repent having sacrificed so much for the sake of a man who represented so little.

She enjoyed a few short months of supreme felicity, then disillusion came, and with it the inevitable sorrows and heart-burnings which always follow upon such reckless actions. She found out that she had absolutely nothing in common with the Italian, whom her imagination had transformed into a kind of demi-god, and in whose affection she had hoped to find a consolation for all the miseries of her past. Soon quarrels ensued, followed by all kinds of strife; and the miserable, foolish woman found that she had laid herself open to the most bitter attacks from people whom no sense of honour, and no scruples, could stop in their determination to wreak upon her the lowest and meanest

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revenge that could be conceived. Certainly the Princess was not well advised when she published the story of her life ; but this does not excuse the pamphlet which the Italian music-master, with whose good looks she had been enthralled, issued against the woman who had sacrificed everything for his sake.

Since the separation which put an end to the second marriage of the Countess of Montignoso nothing further has been heard about her. She has vanished into obscurity, and has nevermore thrust herself before the attention of the public. It has been rumoured that, were she to ask his permission, the King of Saxony would not object if she were to take up an abode somewhere near Dresden, and that he was even ready to offer her one of his castles as a place of residence ; but those who have met the Countess say that she would never submit to the humiliation which the acceptance of such an offer would entail. And so, after having filled the world with her name, she has vanished into space—this reckless, foolish daughter of the Habsburgs, who, with all her faults, was probably worth far more even in the matter of moral principles than those who drove her to her ruin.

The story of the Crown Princess of Saxony has reminded me of the other *mésalliances* of which Germany has recently seen so many among the inner circle of her Royalties. Perhaps one of those which caused the greatest sensation, because it was about the first of which a feminine member of a reigning family was guilty, was the marriage of the Princess Henriette of Schleswig-Holstein, the aunt of the present German

SOME UNEQUAL MARRIAGES

Empress, with a man whose birth was wholly inferior, but whose scientific knowledge has placed him among the celebrities of modern Germany—the famous Professor Esmarch. It caused quite an abundance of talk ; people wondered how the Duke of Holstein had ever allowed it to take place. But to those who knew the material conditions which existed in the family of the Princess Henriette there was nothing so very wonderful, after all, in the facility with which she obtained the consent of the head of her House to this unequal marriage. She had barely enough to live upon since the confiscation of the Holstein estates by the Prussian Government after the war with Denmark, whilst Professor Esmarch was immensely rich.

The Royal House of Bavaria has also some unequal marriages to record. Foremost among them come the two unions contracted by the eldest brother of the unfortunate Empress Elisabeth of Austria, Duke Louis in Bavaria, with two actresses, of whom the first, who was created Baroness of Wallersee, died some years ago, whilst the second, Madame von Bartoll, divorced him after a very short time, alleging against him different acts of cruelty which were the more extraordinary in that he was already an old man, far advanced into the eighties.

In general, the Wittelsbach family has been remarkable for its extravagances, which, perhaps, are more the fault of continual intermarriage with each other, or with the Habsburgs, than the hereditary eccentricity which has always been one of its principal characteristics. The fear to sully its escutcheon by

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an alliance with an inferior House has always made it seek husbands and wives in Austria or among the Italian Bourbons, and this constant mixing together of the same blood was bound to have painful consequences in the matter of intellectual development.

If we consider the present alliances of the Bavarian Royal Family we find that the King is wedded to an archduchess, whilst his son and heir, Prince Rupprecht, is the widower of one of his cousins, the Princess Gabrielle in Bavaria, the sister of the Queen of the Belgians. His brother, Prince Leopold, is the husband of the Archduchess Gisela, the eldest daughter of the Emperor Francis Joseph and of a Bavarian princess ; whilst their mother was also a Habsburg. How can one expect, under the circumstances, that a family which has never allowed any fresh blood to mingle with its own should be anything else than eccentric, with a sprinkling of madness here and there ?

So far as other German reigning families are concerned, there is not much to say in regard to their alliances. They have all wedded according to their rank, and the quarterings of the House of Baden, of Saxe-Weimar, of Würtemberg, and of Hesse are absolutely unimpeachable from the heraldic point of view. All these people have chosen the partners of their lives among their own select circle, and never allowed any foreign element to enter. There is nothing to relate about them, and certainly nothing interesting in the way of adventure has approached them. Nor have their marriages had anything to do with politics, with the exception perhaps of that of the Duke of Hesse,

GERMANY'S SOLITUDE

who by his first consort, the Princess Victoria Melita of Coburg, became the cousin of the Tsar before the wedding of the latter with his youngest sister, the Princess Alix, made him his brother-in-law. The war, however, has swept away all such ties. It has left Germany in solitude. Its Royalties have no matrimonial future outside their own States and kingdoms, and can only expect to marry and intermarry with the Habsburgs.

CHAPTER XI

THE ROYAL HOUSE OF SWEDEN

ONE of the most curious Royal histories of modern Europe is the romance of the dynasty of Bernadotte. A Republican general of no birth whatever, the son of a lawyer of Pau who began his military career as a private in an infantry regiment, and who, by his personal merits and his indomitable courage, rose to the dignity of a Marshal of France, was, by a freak of fortune such as only occurs during revolutions and cataclysms that change the face of the world, adopted by one of the last descendants of the old and illustrious House of Wasa, and became in time King of Sweden, the country in Europe where the aristocracy was the most rigid in its custom never to allow an intruder to enter its ranks. He succeeded, nevertheless, not only in imposing himself upon a nobility which had kept in check such sovereigns as Charles XII. and Gustave III., but also in making himself universally respected and generally liked by his people. He brought to the Court of Sweden the simple habits combined with an exaggerated love for magnificence which were the distinctive features in the characters of all the generals of Napoleon I. ; and when he died he left his posterity in the enjoyment of a throne to which they never could

AN AWKWARD BLUNDER

have aspired, but upon which they have maintained themselves to this day, whilst so many others have foundered and crumbled into dust all around them.

Charles XIV., as he called himself, had been married a considerable number of years when he became King of Sweden and Norway. His wife was of very humble origin, Eugénie Désirée Clary, the daughter of a rich merchant of Marseilles whose sister was the wife of Joseph Bonaparte, the eldest brother of Napoleon I. She had neither the manners nor the education of a queen, and when her husband persuaded her to join him in Sweden—a thing which she refused to do for a considerable time—she considerably shocked Stockholm society by the various mistakes which she made in the matter of Court ceremonial. She never could learn the language of her new country, and an amusing anecdote is related concerning her in those most entertaining memoirs written by Mme. de Hegermann Lidencrone. It seems that poor Queen Désirée was taught certain phrases in Swedish which she was told she had to use at her first reception. When ladies were presented to her she was to say, "Are you married, madame?" And then, "Have you any children?" Of course, she did not understand the answers, and was so unlucky as to mix things up, so that once she began her conversation with a lady by asking, "Have you any children?" The lady hastened to answer, "Yes, your Majesty, I have seven." "Are you married?" then asked the Queen most graciously, to the general consternation of the whole assembly.

Apart from her ignorance of the Swedish language

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and of the customs of a Court, the consort of Charles Bernadotte was an excellent and kind-hearted creature, who, besides, had enough intelligence to understand that she would further the interests of her husband more usefully if she were not seen too much in Sweden, so she obtained from him permission to return to Paris, "on a short visit," as she said; and she never went back to Stockholm, but died, long after the fall of the Napoleonic dynasty, in the lovely palace she had built for herself in the French capital. Busybodies said that Queen Désirée was very much in love with the famous Prince de Talleyrand, and that this luckless passion was partly the reason why she insisted upon living in France.

The only son of the King and Queen—who subsequently reigned as King Oscar I. of Sweden and Norway—did not, in spite of his Royal crown, find it an easy thing to get a wife, as the haughty German princesses whom he tried to win did not take kindly to his plebeian origin. At last he wedded the daughter of Prince Eugène of Beauharnais, Napoleon's stepson, the Princess Josephine of Leuchtenberg, who brought with her to the Court of Stockholm an atmosphere of great elegance. They had three sons.

The eldest, Charles XV., was lucky enough to inspire with feelings of deep affection the Princess Louise of Nassau, daughter of the King of the Netherlands, and sister of the Grand Duchess Sophie of Saxe-Weimar, and of the father of the present Queen of Holland. She brought him an enormous fortune and some lovely jewels as her dowry, which, after her death and that

A GOOD QUEEN

of the King, passed to their only daughter, who was named Louise, like her mother. Having no son, the King's brother, Prince Oscar, succeeded to the throne, but not to the millions which had been such a material help to his predecessor in upholding the dignity of his rank. Princess Louise became the wife of the late King Frederick VIII. of Denmark and the mother of the present Sovereign.

King Oscar II. was an exceedingly pleasant man, very artistic in his tastes and pursuits, rather democratic in his manners, and most attentive to ladies in general, no matter what might be their position in life, which did not trouble him much provided they had pretty faces and graceful figures. He had married a Princess of Nassau, the cousin of his sister-in-law, Queen Louise, and though he made her very unhappy the couple knew how to preserve appearances, and were never seen or heard to quarrel. The Queen was a woman of great virtues, most charitable disposition, and excellent heart. Apart from these qualities she was clever, had dignified manners, and whenever she appeared in public adorned with the Crown jewels, some of which were relics of the former glories of the Wasas, she looked every inch a queen. Her marriage with the head of the Bernadotte dynasty brought it many advantages, and it was during the reign of her husband that it took its place definitely among the Courts of Europe, and was accepted by them as of their own rank.

Queen Sophie took a great interest in the intellectual and social development of Sweden, as well as in all the educational questions of her country, and she

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brought up her sons admirably, watching them with the utmost devotion and affection, and inspiring them with her own love for everything that was good, great, and useful to the nation over which she reigned.

Queen Sophie was a great matchmaker. Ever since the birth of her sons she had thought about their future establishment, and wondered with what princesses she could ally them. The eldest, the Crown Prince Gustave, was a most distinguished man, and promised early to become the wise monarch he has since shown himself to be. The Queen hoped that he would make a brilliant match, and whenever she visited Germany she tried to become acquainted with the marriageable princesses of that country.

Her brother, the Duke of Nassau, notwithstanding the fact that he had been despoiled of a large part of his domains by Prussia during the war of 1866, had remained on terms of good and even intimate friendship with the Grand Duke of Baden, whose wife was the Princess Louise of Prussia. Princess Louise was the sister of the Crown Prince of Germany, to whose eldest son the Duke was meditating marrying his only daughter, the Princess Hilda of Nassau, a desire which he realised a few years later. The Duke advised his sister to go to Karlsruhe and to carefully observe the Princess Victoria of Baden, the daughter of the Grand Ducal pair, who, as he told her, was in possession of all the qualities which are considered indispensable in a future queen. The visit took place, and whilst Queen Sophie was at Karlsruhe the Crown Prince of Sweden joined her. It

PRINCESS VICTORIA OF BADEN

was not long before the sweetness of the young princess appealed to him, and made him fall in with pleasure with the Queen of Sweden's plans.

Princess Victoria of Baden was a great match, inasmuch as she was the favourite granddaughter of the old Emperor William, and also her near relationship with the Imperial House of Germany would ensure to Sweden the protection of the former country against a Russian aggression, which, for some reason that has never been explained, is feared to this day in Sweden. She was rich and also beautiful, though a trifle too tall, which was not such a disadvantage, because the Crown Prince also boasted of a considerable number of inches in his height. She was clever, tactful, and, except for very delicate health, was the ideal of a princess who was destined to wear one day the crown of a queen consort. When the marriage took place it was considered to be the best match the Crown Prince could possibly have made. It gave considerable pleasure in Berlin, where there were rejoicings because the grandchild of the beloved Sovereign had contracted such a brilliant alliance. A year or two later the Crown Prince and Princess of Sweden went on a visit to the German capital on the occasion of the eightieth birthday of the Emperor, and the Crown Princess's presence was the cause of much excitement at the Berlin Court, where she and her husband were received with delight and honour. She created an immense sensation when she appeared at the concert which took place in the Old Castle, covered as she was with the most magnificent diamonds and

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sapphires. And when she visited Berlin again after the marriage of her brother, the hereditary Grand Duke of Baden, with the Princess Hilda of Nassau, she found that the impression which she had produced on her previous visit was neither forgotten nor effaced.

It would be useless to deny that the Queen of Sweden's sympathies are essentially German. Gossip even said lately in Stockholm that this fact has estranged her from her daughter-in-law, the present Crown Princess Margaret, but the loving and affectionate nature of these two Royal ladies does not make this assertion a probable one, and most likely it is but one of those idle rumours such as ill-natured people like to spread. But that the heart of Queen Victoria is faithful to the land of her birth cannot be doubted, nor is it to be wondered at, considering all the family ties which she has in that country, where her aged mother lives, whom she visits several times in the year. However, her affection for Germany is neither a fanatical nor an unreasonable one, and it is likely that another rumour, which has found a great deal of credence at Stockholm lately, is more exact than the one which I have mentioned above—namely, that the Queen has made repeated efforts to use her influence with her cousin the Emperor William to propose a conference during which the terms of an honourable peace could be discussed so as to put an end to the miserable strife which is desolating Europe. Queen Victoria has great influence in political spheres in Berlin, where her tact is generally recognised, and she would be the most likely person to succeed in such a plan.

A CONFIRMED BACHELOR

This digression has carried me far from Queen Sophie of Sweden and from her match-making propensities, and I must return to them. When she had seen her eldest son the Crown Prince well settled with a wife whom he loved, she began once more to think about the princesses eligible to marry her other three boys. The youngest, Prince Eugène, had declared that he intended to remain a bachelor, and that nothing in the world would induce him to give up the unfettered existence to which he had become so used. He was an artist of no mean talent, and the pictures which he sent at different times to various exhibitions would have been commended, even if he had not been a member of a reigning house. He had built for himself a lovely villa in the neighbourhood of Stockholm, where he lived the greater part of the year, and where, if the truth be told, he had invited more than once ladies belonging to the merry set of the capital to help him to while away the solitude of his days. After having made several attempts to get him to consider marriage, his mother at last gave up all hope, and turned her energies towards his brother Prince Charles, whom she hoped to find more pliable to her wishes.

That hope was justified. The young Prince happened to be in love with his cousin, the Princess Ingeborg of Denmark, one of the daughters of the Crown Prince, but he had never dared to make the avowal of this affection either to his parents or to the Princess herself. It was the old Queen of Denmark who learned the truth from her granddaughter during one of the frequent visits which her cousin made to Copenhagen,

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

and who, seeing how unhappy the young people were, took it upon herself to speak to the Crown Princess and to write to King Oscar. She at last, not without some difficulty—because, for some reason or other, the former objected to her child marrying a near relative—arranged the marriage. It took place at the Danish Court, and was one of the last State ceremonies which the venerable Queen attended before her death.

When the newly married couple arrived in Stockholm they were received most cordially by the population of the Swedish capital, to whom the Princess Ingeborg was no stranger, as she had often been there with her mother, the Crown Princess of Denmark. She was not regularly beautiful, but essentially smart, with something English about her, which she had copied from her aunt, Queen Alexandra, whom she admired exceedingly and had taken as her model.

The young bride soon made herself popular in the country to which she was bound by so many ties even before it had become her own. Fond of society, Princess Ingeborg went about more than any of the other members of the Royal Family, and was seen at races, at the opera, at public balls even, where she danced with great zest and animation, and everywhere she radiated somewhat of her exuberant spirits and brightness of character and temper. People liked her and admired the dignified frankness of her manners; they appreciated the free and easy manner in which she put at their ease all those who were admitted into her presence. King Oscar was very fond of her, and enjoyed the cleverness of her conversation, whilst the

THE ROMANCE OF PRINCE OSCAR

Queen felt delighted to see her son happy, and rejoiced, moreover, to have for her daughter a niece who had always been her favourite ever since her childhood. She only wished that Prince Eugène could have been induced to follow the good example of his brother, and seek for himself a companion as charming as the wife of Prince Charles.

Before the latter's marriage another of his brothers, Prince Oscar, had been the hero of a romance, which for a considerable time occupied the minds and conversation of Stockholm society before it adjusted itself, by a morganatic marriage with one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting, Miss Ebba Munck. The latter was not pretty, but clever, agreeable, and very religious—a fact which helped to win her the heart of Prince Oscar, who was himself of a rather mystic temperament. The lady-in-waiting also was high in the affections of the Queen, who was a most rigid Protestant, and who undertook the unpleasant task of breaking the news to the King that their son preferred to renounce the privileges of his rank rather than give up the girl whom he loved, although he knew but too well she could never hope to be officially recognised as a Royal Princess of Sweden and Norway.

At first the King objected so strongly that it seemed he would never relent, and something like two years passed away before he at last allowed himself to be persuaded, and even then he refused to be present at his son's marriage, which was attended only by the Queen, who from the first had been most favourable to it. Prince Oscar took the name and title of

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

Prince Bernadotte, whilst his children received that of Counts and Countesses of Wisborg. He settled with his wife on an estate which he possessed in the country at a few hours' distance from Stockholm, and it was only when his sons grew up, and it became necessary for them to attend a school, that they returned to the capital, where they lead the existence of private people, and are but seldom seen in society. The Prince can be seen sometimes in the evening when he takes his dogs out for a walk in the Hummle Garten, the principal park of Stockholm, and no one would guess when meeting this grey-haired old gentleman walking leisurely along, dressed in a dark coat, with a rather shabby hat, that he is the son of one king and the brother of another.

When all her children were safely married, Queen Sophie turned her thoughts towards her grandsons. She had a great wish—which one day she confided to a personal friend, Mr. Augustus Hare—to arrange a marriage for one of her own boys with an English princess, but as events did not then favour it, she reverted to the idea when the sons of the present monarch reached a marriageable age. It was principally at her instigation that the eldest, Prince Gustave Adolphus, was sent to Egypt at a moment when she knew that the Duke and Duchess of Connaught with their children were wintering there; and it was she who first approached the Duchess to ascertain whether she would view with favourable eyes a union between the future King of Sweden and her eldest girl, the Princess Margaret.

The Duke of Connaught, of course, referred the matter to his brother, King Edward, who was quite



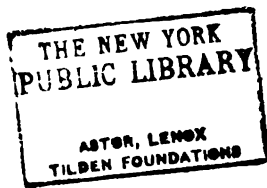
THE CROWN PRINCESS OF SWEDEN



THE CHILDREN OF THE CROWN PRINCE
AND PRINCESS :
Princess Gustave, Sigvard, and Bertil and
Princess Ingrid.



THE CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN



A HAPPY UNION

delighted, and encouraged him to agree to the demand of the Swedish Court, provided the Princess herself was not averse to it. The English Sovereign belonged to those monarchs who believe that family alliances may prove of great advantage in certain political complications and crises in the world; and, besides, he was most anxious to see his numerous nieces occupy as many thrones in Europe as possible. He was, perhaps, the only man in the world who read the future with an unerring perspicacity, inasmuch as it meant an attack of Prussia on the civilised nations of the earth, and he wished England to be in possession of strong sympathies wherever it was possible for her to secure them. He knew, also, that the charm of all the English princesses—which they owe to the admirable education that they receive—very quickly makes them popular, wherever they happen to be, and he trusted to the charm and wisdom of the Princess Margaret of Connaught to win for Great Britain the goodwill of the people and the Government of Sweden.

The marriage was solemnised with great pomp at Windsor, and was attended by the parents of the bridegroom, the Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Sweden, who came over to England for this important occasion. It turned out to be a very happy union, and the Crown Princess immediately won the affections of the Swedish people. She is bright, amiable, not timid at all, and yet reserved and dignified in all her actions and movements, and she entered with pleasure into all the interests of her new country, appearing only to observe its good points, forgetting the bad ones

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

and never allowing others to guess that she had seen them. The population of Stockholm grew to like her, and, cold as the Swedish people are generally in their demeanour, their hearts warmed when they looked at the fair beauty of the youthful English princess, who had always a bright word and a pleasant smile for them. She had children too—sweet babies, with their mother's blue eyes and lovely hair—and it was the prettiest sight in the world to watch her running about the avenues of the park of Sögenfry, the summer seat of the Crown Prince, with her little boys and her beautiful small girl. She was a child herself in all but reason and maturity of judgment, which she possessed far beyond her years. The Dowager Queen Sophie doted on her, and never felt so happy as when she could have her near her; even her sister-in-law, the wayward Princess Marie of Russia, liked to be with her, and more than once applied to her for advice, which, unfortunately for her, she never followed.

Princess Marie was also hardly more than a child when she was married, at sixteen, to a man she hardly knew. She had passed a sad childhood with her aunt, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia, who had brought her up most rigidly and with such severity that the first use she made of her liberty, when at last it was granted to her through her marriage, was to abuse it. She never did any harm; indeed, there was no harm in her; after all, it was the recklessness of inexperience and an indifference to the world's judgments that savoured of Romanoff hauteur, and which simple Swedish people did not understand. Princess Marie

A WAYWARD CHILD

was immensely liked in Sweden, but no one could understand her or follow her in the utterly wild flights of conduct she constantly indulged in. She never could understand the habits and customs of a society which, being very small, necessarily was very much occupied in watching its neighbours, and especially the actions of the Royal family.

Anecdotes without number were related as to the utter disregard in which she held public opinion, and her indifference to the judgments and opinions of Mrs. Grundy. At first people were amused with her extravagances, and, attributing them to her extreme youth, forgave them freely, remarking that she was but a child who would be "sobered" as time went on. The King was fond of her, and she returned his affection. Gustave V. is essentially kind and sympathetic, and perhaps in his inmost heart he felt sorry for the wayward child who was thus thrust into a strange country, the language of which she had refused to learn, the habits of which seemed to her so strange and so different from anything that she had ever seen before. Her education had not prepared her for the exigencies of life, and left her at the mercy of certain disasters which unfortunately occur in the course of nearly every human life.

The King understood all this, and often tried to obtain his daughter-in-law's confidence, but she persistently refused to open her heart to him, shutting herself up in a kind of haughty reserve from the only man who could have helped her, and who might have imposed silence on the evil tongues already making mischief

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

with her good name. The Queen did not like Princess Marie—she had not viewed her marriage with pleasure—and the Queen Dowager, who at first had rejoiced at an alliance which made her grandson the cousin of the Tsar of All the Russias, became prejudiced also against the poor little princess, whose waywardness displeased her, and whose religion was abhorrent to her. It was not long before Princess Marie turned to her own people for comfort. She often visited the Russian Legation, where she could, at least, talk of the subjects that interested her, and forget for a few brief moments that she lived in Sweden, where princesses could not do as they liked.

There was at that time at the Russian Legation a lady of remarkable intelligence, Madame Sergieieff, whose husband occupied the post of Minister at the Court of Sweden. She did her best to persuade the Princess Marie to resign herself to her lot, and to make the necessary concessions to Stockholm society. She spoke in a motherly way to the impetuous, impulsive girl, who sobbed loudly whenever she found herself thwarted in something or other that was not in strict accordance with the rules which prevailed in Sweden. Under the influence of Madame Sergieieff the young princess became quieter, and applied herself to the task of overcoming the prejudices against her which existed in the minds of certain members of her family. She did not like the Princess Ingeborg, whom she accused of being jealous of herself, her money, and her jewels, and though she stood in awe of the Queen, she still showed herself imper-

ROYAL DISPLEASURE

tinent to her. This exasperated the proud, haughty Sovereign, whose notions of right and wrong differed so essentially from those of the Russian princess whom, much against her will, she had accepted as a daughter-in-law.

Unfortunately for the princess, Madame Sergieieff became a widow and had to leave Stockholm, whereby the Royal little butterfly lost the only disinterested friend she had. The new Russian Minister who was appointed, M. Sawinski, was hardly capable of guiding such a headstrong, stubborn princess. Nevertheless, she thought she could look upon him as an adviser as real and disinterested as Madame Sergieieff, and made him her confidant. They used to take long rides together, much to the scandal of staid Stockholm society, which considered it a breach of etiquette and of good taste. And one day when Prince William of Sweden had a particularly stormy quarrel with his wife, she rushed to the Russian Legation to pour out the story of her wrongs, real or imaginary, into the sympathetic ears of M. Sawinski. Princess Marie had a long interview with him in his study, and when this became known even the patience of the King was exhausted, and he spoke to his daughter-in-law rather more sharply than was his wont. A fiery interchange of words ensued, during which the Princess declared that she wanted a divorce and to return to Russia. When, however, she sought to obtain permission to do so, she met with a cold refusal from the Tsar, who advised her to become reconciled with her husband and to remain where she was.

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

Exasperated beyond measure, the Princess wrote an impertinent letter to the Empress, and taking her maid with her, she left for Paris one fine morning to join her father, who was living there with his second wife, the Countess of Hohenfelsen. Princess Marie begged him to protect her against what she called the bad treatment which she had to endure from her husband. The Grand Duke Paul received his daughter with open arms, and whatever he may have told her in private he took her part in public. All his arguments failed to induce the Princess to return to Stockholm, which, as he said, was quite the best thing to do, whereupon he took her to Petersburg, where he spoke to the Emperor and at last succeeded in obtaining the latter's consent to a divorce which would allow the Princess Marie to return to Russia, and resume her former rank and position.

What seemed at first easy offered considerable difficulties afterwards, because of financial considerations. The Court of Sweden wanted to have confirmed the rights of the little boy, to whom the consort of Prince William had given birth a year after her marriage, so that his share of his mother's inheritance should not be lost to him, and the manner in which this was to be effected gave rise to considerable discussion. At last it was decided that the child should remain in Sweden to be educated there by the Queen, and that his mother would only be allowed to see him at stated intervals. This being agreed, a certain sum out of the Princess Marie's fortune was set aside for his future use and benefit, together with the lovely

HIDDEN QUALITIES

house which had been bought for her in Stockholm and given to her as a wedding present by the Tsar. At the conclusion of all these important negotiations, which were ultimately arranged to the satisfaction of the interested parties, Marie Pavlovna was allowed to resume her rank at the Russian Court.

At first the reinstated Grand Duchess Pavlovna declared herself delighted; but soon she found that her position in Russia was not much better than the one she had fled from in Stockholm. Her aunt, the Empress Dowager, received her with reproaches, being more severe, indeed, than was altogether consistent with justice. The girl, goaded out of all patience, turned round upon this, and in her turn silenced Marie Feodorovna by the unexpected and clear manner in which she defended herself; but though she scored in that encounter with her august relative, this only added to the difficulties of the situation. What would have happened to her if the war had not broken out it is impossible to say, but it proved a solution to the domestic worries of the divorced wife of Prince William of Sweden. She immediately enrolled herself under the banner of the Red Cross, and in her capacity of Sister of Charity she has revealed many noble qualities which no one had ever suspected her of possessing. It is likely that later on people will judge the Grand Duchess less harshly, and make allowances for the impetuosity of a child who was launched into married life while she was yet absolutely ignorant of the world, and who did not obtain from her husband the help and sympathy which she had the right to expect from him.

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

It is to be hoped that she will marry again, and, indeed, the probability of such a happening has already been discussed. She is young and pretty, and probably her experiences as a Sister of Charity will do much to sober her; and though her conduct in Sweden may have given rise to criticism, it had never been found lacking in honesty. Her faults have been those of a spoilt child, and, unfortunately for her, she has been compelled to expiate them with a woman's tears.

CHAPTER XII

THE BOURBON-ORLEANS DYNASTY

THOUGH the House of Bourbon has long ceased to count among the Sovereign families of Europe, this circumstance has not prevented its members from contracting brilliant alliances, and in some cases marriages that have brought them on the steps of still existing thrones.

The Orleans branch especially was always trying to obtain, by marriage or by inheritance, advantages that would add to the vast fortunes which they had accumulated, and in some cases to the political influence which they had succeeded in acquiring. The head, the Comte de Paris, was certainly the most disinterested member of his family, perhaps because he felt sure that whenever a revolution or some unforeseen occurrence would give back to the Bourbons the crown which they had lost, it could not be offered to anyone but himself. He was a conscientious, straightforward man, but without any great strength of character, and with no considerable political aptitude. He expired bravely after terrible sufferings, borne with an almost superhuman patience, but he had never had the courage to assert himself and to dare to do anything to force France to recognise him as its legitimate

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

king. In spite of the high name which he bore, and the traditions which he embodied, he was at heart a Republican in the sense that he would not have tried to impose himself on the French nation without having been requested by it to do so. Like all the Orleans since the times of the too famous *Egalité*, he was a child of the Revolution, certain principles of which he admired even whilst condemning some of its excesses. In a word, he was essentially bourgeois, and though he was the fine type of what a nobleman should be, he never could become a *grand seigneur*, as, for instance, was the Comte de Chambord. He had no ambition for himself, and scarcely any for his eldest son, perhaps because he felt the uselessness of it in face of the character and habits of that son ; but he was desirous of seeing his daughters well established in the world. He would have liked them to wear Royal crowns, as they would have undoubtedly done had he himself occupied the throne of Louis XIV. From the time his eldest daughter, the Princess Amélie, attained an age when she could have been married, he examined anxiously all the chances which she possessed of making a brilliant match, and was heard more than once to declare that in his opinion no one was more worthy of becoming a queen.

Whether these dreams of grandeur would ever have had a chance to be realised it is hard to tell, had not quite an unforeseen occurrence happened, the result of which was that she was called upon to become the Sovereign of Portugal.

This unforeseen circumstance was a journey which

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

the Comtesse Fernand de la Ferronays, one of the personal friends of the Comte and Comtesse de Paris took to Lisbon. A wandering spirit, which had already made the Comtesse explore all kinds of countries, had taken her to Portugal, where she was well known at Court, having had occasion to meet the Queen at Turin and Florence. Maria Pia was fond of the vivacious Frenchwoman, who passed for one of the wittiest persons in Europe, and as soon as she heard that she had arrived in the Portuguese capital she sent her son, the Crown Prince, to invite her to come and see her as soon as possible. When the Duke of Braganza, as he was called, arrived at the hotel where the Comtesse de la Ferronays was staying, he saw on her table the photograph of a lovely girl which interested and struck him so much that he could not help asking his hostess who it was, and on hearing that it was the portrait of the eldest daughter of the head of the Orleans family, he declared there and then that he would never marry any other woman, and forthwith begged the Comtesse to help him to happiness.

The Comtesse Fernand de la Ferronays was quite delighted, and she hastened to write to the Duc d'Aumale to tell him of this unexpected good fortune. The Duke grasped at once the importance of the communication, and immediately sent to the Crown Prince an invitation to visit Chantilly the next time his fancy and wanderings led him to France.

A few months later saw a brilliant assemblage gathered together under the stately roof of the Condés. The whole Orleans family was there to begin with; the

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

Comte and Comtesse de Paris and their children; and there were also invited the principal notabilities of the Legitimist party in France, such as the La Rochefoucaulds, the Luynes, d'Uzès, and that brave soldier, the Baron de Charette. Magnificent hunts and entertainments were given, and one evening at dinner about a week afterwards the Duc d'Aumale got up and proposed to his guests to drink to the health of the newly engaged pair—the Duke of Braganza, heir to the Crown of Portugal, and his niece, the Princess Amélie of Orleans.

The wedding took place in the following May at Lisbon, and was preceded by the most imposing Royalist demonstration that had ever taken place in France since the Revolution of 1830. The Comte de Paris gave a reception at the Hôtel de Galliera in the rue de Varennes, where he resided when in Paris, to which all the illustrious of France were invited. The Comtesse, with the Princess Amélie beside her, received her guests in the large drawing-room. She stood on a dais which at a distance could easily have given one the idea of being a throne; and she saluted them with a dignity that she had learned at Madrid, coupled with the stiffness usually displayed by the Infantas of Spain. She allowed people to kiss her hand, and gave herself the airs of a real sovereign. Crowds passed before her, and the spontaneity with which Paris had responded to the appeal addressed by her husband to his followers gave serious anxiety to the Government of the Republic, which saw in it a challenge addressed to itself and to Republican institutions. When the Comte and Comtesse de Paris left France with their daughter on their way

EXILED

to Portugal, their journey gave rise to other demonstrations which proved that the monarchical spirit was still alive in the provinces. The French Cabinet determined to put an end to this movement, which it feared might become a source of serious danger, and it proposed to the Chambers a law expelling the heads of the dynasties that had reigned in France. The bridal dress of the newly wedded Duchess of Braganza thus contained in its folds the order of exile for her father and mother from the land which they both loved so well.

The Comte de Paris embarked for England from the little French town of Tréport in Normandy, which was close to his ancestral castle of Eu, whither he had repaired to spend the last days before his departure from France. He was never to see it again, and died at Stowe House, the splendid domain of the Duke of Buckingham, which he had rented as a residence when he arrived in England, and where his daughter, the Princess Amélie, who had already become Queen of Portugal, came to spend with him the last weeks of his life. He was warmly attached to her, and expired with the hope that at least one of his children was safely provided for. How little he guessed all that lay in store for that beloved daughter; and how she was to feel afterwards that God was merciful when He carried away her father before the misfortunes came which were to overpower her and send her also into exile, bereft of husband, son, and crown—calamities which he would have felt far more keenly than he did the personal ones which had befallen him.

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

When the Comte de Paris disappeared from the political scene none of his other children were married. But a few months after he had breathed his last, his second daughter, the Princess Hélène of France, became engaged to the nephew of the King of Italy, Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, Duke of Aosta. This was not a love match, on her part at least, because she had lost her heart long ago to the young Duke of Clarence, the son of the then Prince and Princess of Wales, and had also inspired him with a deep and passionate affection. Politics interfered and rendered their union an impossibility, owing to the difference of religion which stood between them and their happiness. It was out of question for an English Queen to be anything but Protestant ; and the Princess Hélène was far too convinced a Roman Catholic to consent to an abjuration, which, besides, would have brought about a complete breach between her and her family. Her heart was broken, but she would not consent to buy the happiness of her life by means of an action against which all her soul and conscience arose with indignation. After much sorrow and many tears shed in the silence of her room she gave up the hope of wedding the man she loved so ardently, and made that bitter sacrifice with simplicity and courage, but with the feeling that, though so young, she had, according to the expression of the Empress Elisabeth of Austria, "inwardly died" long before the hour came when henceforward for her the world lacked everything that made it bright and beautiful.

PRINCESS HÉLÈNE OF FRANCE

The Princess Hélène was one of the loveliest women in Europe—tall and fair, with a magnificent figure, and a carriage that any queen might have envied. After the death of the Duke of Clarence some people in Russia as well as in France wanted to arrange a marriage between her and the eldest son of the Tsar. And, strange to say, the difference of religion which also existed between them was no longer taken into account, it even being rumoured that the Pope, when consulted on the subject, had declared that there might be means of settling this difficult point to the general satisfaction. The marriage would have had an immense political importance, and perhaps on that very account could not take place. In Russia it would most undoubtedly have been viewed with considerable satisfaction, as France was already very popular there, and there were many people in Petersburg who would have welcomed with enthusiasm a French princess as their future Sovereign.

Other considerations, however, prevailed, and perhaps, also, German influences—which were still very powerful in Russia—were strong enough to nip this plan in the bud. And at last, when the Duke of Aosta, young, handsome, amiable, clever, and the possessor of a considerable fortune, presented himself as a suitor for the hand of the Princess Hélène, she was persuaded by her mother, the Comtesse de Paris, who had strong Italian sympathies, to accept his offer. She was married in the land of exile which had proved so hospitable to her and to all her race. The ceremony took place at Kingston-on-Thames—where, by the way, the Comte

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

de Paris was buried—and the Duke and Duchess left for Turin immediately afterwards. In Italy she made herself loved at once, and very soon venerated, especially by the poorer classes of the population, to whom she showed herself most generous. During a severe illness which she underwent a few years after her marriage all the poor of Turin crowded in the numerous churches of the town and day and night prayed for her recovery. All over Italy she was beloved as no princess had ever been before her, but she was not happy, and, indeed, could hardly be so, with all the remembrances that must have interfered with her enjoyment of the pleasures and the grandeurs of the world. She bore two sons, who for some time were considered as the future heirs to the Crown of Italy, until at last the Queen gave birth to the Prince of Piedmont. After the illness to which I have alluded the health of the young Duchess never became satisfactory, and though the King had appointed the Duke to the command of an army corps at Naples, in the hope that the climate might prove beneficial to his consort, she could not even reside there during the winter months, and had to repair to Egypt, where she spent several years in succession in the Soudan. The marriage of the Duchess of Aosta, though almost as brilliant as that of her sister, the Queen of Portugal, was not a happy one, perhaps because it presented too many chances of happiness, for, as a rule, fate does not allow poor mortals to enjoy the good things which it apparently showers upon them.

About a year after the day which saw the Princess

THE ORLEANS DYNASTY

Hélène united to Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, her brother, the Duke of Orleans, had wedded the Archduchess Marie Dorothée of Austria in Vienna. She was a distant cousin, being the daughter of the Princess Clotilde of Saxe-Coburg, whose mother was the famous Princess Clementine of Orleans, the cleverest of the many clever children of Louis Philippe. The marriage was considered a splendid one for both parties. It delighted the soul of the Comtesse de Paris, whom the constant extravagances of her eldest son had rendered most unhappy, and who hoped that he would at last settle down and try to become a good husband and father to the children she fondly imagined would be born to him, so that the direct line of succession of the Orleans dynasty might be continued.

The Archduchess was a person of the highest merit and of transcendent virtue. Without having the prettiness of absolutely regular features, she had an imposing appearance, a splendid figure, and was altogether a beautiful woman. She possessed everything that could make a man happy, and the whole time that she lived with the Duke of Orleans she fulfilled admirably the duties which her position as consort of the head of the House of France entailed upon her. She won the respect and the esteem of all the Royalist party, but did not succeed in retaining the affections of her husband, from whom she parted at last, not, however, without having been obliged to appeal to the law courts to assure her an income befitting her rank, which the Duke refused to grant to her.

The last time she publicly appeared as Duchess of

ROYAL MARRIAGE MARKET OF EUROPE

Orleans was when her youngest sister-in-law, the Princess Louise, was wedded at Wood Norton with Prince Charles of Bourbon Sicily, an event which was graced by the presence of King Alphonso of Spain, together with his young wife, Queen Victoria Eugénie, of the Queen of Portugal, and several members of the English Royal Family, together with nearly all those of the House of Orleans or of Naples. The event, which was celebrated amidst great splendour, was also remarkable because Queen Amélie of Portugal was never again after that day able to show herself abroad as a reigning queen, for only a few months later King Carlos was assassinated at Lisbon, and when she next came to England it was as an exile and a fugitive.

In addition to Queen Amélie, the Duchess of Aosta and the Princess Louise of Bourbon, the Comte de Paris had another daughter, the Princess Isabella, who wedded her cousin, the Duc de Guise, the youngest son of the Duc and Duchesse de Chartres. The Princess Isabella is the most brilliant member of a very clever family, and though she is seldom seen in Paris—living the greater part of the year either in her castle of Nouvion-en-Thiérache, in the department of Aisne, or else on an estate which the Duke bought in Morocco—she is always welcomed with great effusion by the multitude of friends she has in the French capital whenever she returns to it.

The Orleans, I have related already, were always most careful to seek material benefits from all the alliances which they contracted. Though they were "kings in exile," this did not prevent them from finding wives

PRINCESS ISABELLA

and husbands who brought them these advantages. For instance, the eldest son of the Duke of Nemours, the Comte d'Eu, went to Brazil on purpose to offer himself as a husband to the heiress of that empire, the Princess Isabella. She was not well favoured in looks, but kind and good, and she made him an excellent wife. Their marriage created a stir in the diplomatic world, and intensely displeased Napoleon III., who did not care to see a member of the House of Orleans wedded to a future Empress, and who tried by all the means in his power to prevent it from taking place. His trouble was quite unnecessary, as later events proved, because Dom Pedro II. was overturned by a revolution, and had to fly to France; there he ultimately died in Paris at the Hôtel Bedford, where he occupied a large suite of rooms for many years. It has been said that had he abdicated in favour of the Princess Isabella, as he was asked to do, his dynasty might have remained in possession of the throne. The Princess was popular in Brazil, largely owing to the decree which she had signed during one of her numerous regencies exercised whilst her father was travelling in Europe. This decree abolished slavery all over her states, and it was even hinted to her that she ought to put herself at the head of the Revolutionary movement, and thus save her inheritance for her children. She rejected this offer with scorn, and declared that rather than usurp a throne which did not belong to her she preferred to follow her father into exile; which she did, living ever since either in Paris, where she has bought a splendid villa at Boulogne-

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sur-Seine, or else at the castle of Eu, which her husband had purchased from his nephew, the Duke of Orleans, during one of the financial crises which recurred periodically in the latter's life.

The Count and Countess have improved the old domain, and have gathered together many family relics of the Bourbon and Braganza dynasties, which they cherish and keep most precious. The Countess d'Eu is now an old woman, very proud and haughty, but extremely charitable and good, who, being far cleverer than her husband, is nevertheless always most anxious not to let the outside world discover the fact. She has three sons, of whom the eldest, Dom Pedro, as he is called, is a fat and fair fellow, extremely good-natured, with a sufficient amount of brains to go about most comfortably in the world. He made a morganatic marriage, much to the distress of his parents, who for a long time refused him permission to wed the Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky, an Austrian lady with whom he had been in love ever since he left the schoolroom. His parents at last gave their consent only under the condition that he should renounce his rights to the throne of Brazil in favour of his younger brother Prince Louis, and further that he should wait until the latter was married—conditions to which he cheerfully assented. Just one week after Prince Louis had been united with much pomp and ceremony to the Princess Maria Pia of Bourbon, one of the daughters of the Count and Countess of Caserta, Dom Pedro married quite privately, in the presence of only a few friends, the girl for whose sake he had

A MARTYR'S DEATH

given up the chance—remote, it is true—of becoming an Emperor.

The Comte d'Eu had one brother, the Duke of Alençon, a saintly man who should have been a monk, and who never should have married, as he did, the Princess Sophie in Bavaria, sister of the Empress Elisabeth of Austria, and of the once lovely Queen of Naples. She was burned to death during the fire that consumed the famous Bazar de la Charité in Paris. During her lifetime she had always shown herself more or less eccentric. It was related to me by a survivor of this awful catastrophe that when the flames were already spreading towards the place where the Duchess was standing immovable at her counter, one of the persons present implored her to follow her and try to get out of the furnace, which they might yet have done. In reply Sophie in Bavaria quietly said, "Not before all the rest have gone out," and taking the pins out of her glorious hair she allowed it to fall on her shoulders, kneeling down at the same time and beginning to pray in a loud voice. The last that was seen of her was when her hair caught fire, and for one moment her figure emerged out of an ocean of flame; then the smoke prevented anything further from being seen, and the whole building crumbled down over those unfortunate victims who had not been able to escape. The body of the Duchess of Alençon—so disfigured that it was only by her wedding-ring that it was recognised—was found the next day and was taken to the Orleans family vault at Dreux.

Two children had been born to her—a boy and a

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girl. The latter married one of her Bavarian cousins, Prince Alphonso, and lives in Munich, whilst the former, preferring Paris to every other place in the world, determined to find for himself a consort who would share this taste with him. This was not so very easy, considering the fact that there were no more disposable Orleans princesses, and for some reasons, into which it is useless to enter here, the Duc de Vendôme—for such was his title—did not care to unite himself to a Bourbon of the Sicilian line.

At this juncture one of the oldest friends of the Orleans family, the Marquis de Beauvoir, who for a considerable time had occupied the position of private secretary to the Comte de Paris, made the proposition that the Duc de Vendôme should seek the hand of the Princess Henriette of Belgium, the eldest daughter of the Count and Countess of Flanders. She had a dowry amounting to several millions, and was very beautiful; but rumour would have it that she was already engaged to some German prince, and the Duc d'Alençon did not wish to expose his son to the risk of a refusal. The Marquis de Beauvoir then offered to go to Brussels and ascertain for himself whether the news was true or not, and if not to find out prudently whether there was any chance for the Duc de Vendôme to be accepted as a husband by the Princess Henriette and her parents.

The marquis started for Belgium, and it did not take him long to convince himself that an alliance with the House of Orleans—to which the Belgian dynasty was already related—would prove very acceptable to

BELGIAN REGARD FOR SPAIN

the Count of Flanders, as well as to his brother, King Leopold, who always had the last word in all questions concerning the establishment of his nephews and nieces. The Duc de Vendôme thereupon travelled to Brussels, and on February 12th, 1896, the nuptials of the only son of the Duke of Alençon with Henriette-Marie-Charlotte, Princess of Belgium, were celebrated in the Cathedral of Ste. Gudule.

The Duke returned to France with his wife, and they settled in a suburb of Paris—at Neuilly, where they built for themselves a lovely house in the rue Borghèse. They have resided there in the spring and autumn of each year ever since, spending the winters at their villa at Cannes, the Château St. Michel, and the summers in the Tyrol, where they also possess a property which had been the favourite house of the unfortunate Duchess of Alençon. The Duchesse de Vendôme was very fond of society and liked to entertain her friends; and she is the only princess belonging to the Orleans family whom one meets at all the fashionable places in Paris: the races, opera, theatres and restaurants, and also at the different Embassies and the houses of the leaders of Royalist society. She has a son and several daughters, of whom the eldest is already eighteen; whilst the youngest, Princess Geneviève, is spoken of by the French monarchists as a likely bride for her cousin the Duke of Brabant, the heir of King Albert of Belgium. This contingency, however, is not very probable, as both King Albert and his Queen would prefer, for many reasons, to have for their daughter-in-law an Infanta of Spain, whose English blood appeals

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to them. Besides, the King is very much against marriages between first cousins, and though he dearly loves his sister, yet he would not care to have one of his nieces as a daughter-in-law.

The Comtesse de Paris had one brother, Prince Antoine of Orleans, who, after the death of his mother's oldest friend, the Duchess of Galliera, took her title. The Duchess, having the right to dispose of it according to Italian custom, had left it to him, together with a considerable sum of money. His marriage was the cause of a certain amount of gossip, owing to the impetuosity of character displayed by the lady whom he made his wife, and to his own propensity for cards and gaiety. He had wedded the Infanta Donna Eulalia of Spain, the sister of the late King Alphonso XII., who, having been brought up almost entirely in Paris, where her mother, Queen Isabella, lived surrounded with all the pomp of a Royal Court, had taken French manners, was imbued with French sympathies, and never felt quite at her ease in Madrid. Especially was this so after the advent at the Royal Palace of Queen Marie Christine, whose rigidity of principles did not agree with her own conception as to the pleasures and difficulties of life. She did not care for Prince Antoine, but thought it better to marry him, and to be able to live where she liked afterwards, instead of remaining in Spain, where she had to spend her life amidst the thralldom of an etiquette against which her whole soul revolted.

The Infanta persuaded her husband to take a house in Paris, where for a certain number of years

A BID FOR FREEDOM

they contrived to live together without quarrelling too much. Then the Infanta became gradually more and more independent; she took to travelling on her own account, visiting Russia, Germany, Denmark, and Italy; the latter country, however, she did not like, perhaps because when there she found herself crushed under the personality of the talented Queen Margherita.

When she settled down again in Paris she opened the doors of her Paris house to writers and artists who would never have been allowed to enter an Infanta's presence in Madrid, and she went about more than any other Royal princess had ever done in Paris. She was fond of balls and parties; cared for riding, dancing, skating, rowing, and game-shooting. In short, she was all that an Infanta ought not to be in the eyes of a stiff and archaic etiquette; it is no wonder, indeed, that at last she fell into disgrace with Marie Christine, and was at one moment threatened with a curtailment of her allowance. This unpleasant event might have happened to her had it not been that she captured the good graces of her nephew, the present King, who looked upon her unconventional ways with more indulgent eyes than his mother had done.

But when Donna Eulalia wrote and published a book in which her Socialistic leanings and sympathies came out too prominently for the thing not to be noticed, Alphonso XIII. was constrained by his family to write to his aunt and to express to her his disapproval of her actions, as well as to insist upon her retracting the opinions expressed in the volume, which had given rise to such a storm in monarchical circles. The Princess

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had to submit, but after she had eaten "humble pie" she was restored to favour, and has gone on amusing herself in Paris, which has remained to this day her favourite place of residence.

A few years before the episode of the book, the Infanta sought to be divorced from her husband. This desire created a sensation, as such a thing had never before occurred in the history of the Royal Family of Spain. At last things were settled, thanks partly to the intervention of the Comtesse de Paris, who arranged a *modus vivendi* that allowed the Infanta to part without scandal from a husband she ought never to have been persuaded to marry. The Duc de Galliera went to live with his sister at San Lucar de Barrameda, the splendid domain in Andalusia which they had jointly inherited from their mother, the deceased Duchess of Montpensier, and rarely showed himself in Paris, and only when his wife was sojourning in Spain. The Infanta Eulalia occupies a flat on the Boulevard Lannes, which she calls a *piéd à terre*, but which is large enough for her to receive her numerous friends in comfort. She still writes books, but has grown more prudent in the enunciation of the opinions which she professes, and lately has become the most tender of grandmothers, and dotes on the three sturdy boys which have been born to her son and daughter-in-law, Prince Alphonso and Princess Beatrice of Orleans. She is still pretty and very youthful-looking, as fond of society as ever, and troubles as little as possible about all the unpleasant things of life represented by dressmakers'

THE LOVE OF DON ALPHONSO

bills, worries with one's maid, and quarrels with one's husband.

Her marriage was essentially *un mariage de raison*, where politics, convenience, questions of fortune and of position had played the principal part. Of love there had never been a mention, and no one would have been more surprised than the Infanta herself if one had hinted at the possibility of such a feeling existing between her and her cousin Don Antonio of Orleans. But when her eldest son's fate had to be decided, she found, to her extreme astonishment, that he, the child of a most unromantic mother, was about to contract an alliance in which the romantic element constituted the larger part.

Don Alphonso is a pleasant and amiable young man who was brought up in England, and looks more like an Englishman than a man of his own race. Perhaps it was this last circumstance which influenced the Princess Beatrice of Coburg, the youngest daughter of the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, formerly Duchess of Edinburgh. The fact remains that she fell violently in love with him, and that he reciprocated her feelings. The Princess is the elder by something like two or three years. She is very lovely, and clever, and was mentioned as a possible bride for the King of Spain before he met the fair-haired Princess Ena of Battenberg and forgot the whole world on looking into her splendid eyes. Princess Beatrice had made quite a sensation in London when her mother had taken her there during the season, and wherever she had been she had excited general admiration. Her birth and

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position were unimpeachable; she was the granddaughter of Queen Victoria and also of a late Tsar of Russia; her sisters were married respectively to the Crown Prince of Roumania, to the Grand Duke Cyril of Russia, and to the Prince of Hohenlohe-Langenburg.

No alliance in the world could have been better for a younger member of the House of Orleans. One could therefore suppose that the first announcement of it would be received with enthusiasm at the Court of Madrid, where the Prince resided, but unfortunately the religious question again cropped up, and the Queen Regent declared that it was impossible to admit a Protestant member into the Spanish Royal Family. The Princess Beatrice was therefore asked to follow the example of her cousin, the young Queen Victoria, and to abjure Protestantism in order to enter the Roman Catholic Church. She refused, declaring that she would never consent to a step that would be entirely against her conscience. Upon this King Alphonso absolutely forbade his cousin to think of an alliance which would excite public opinion at Madrid against the reigning dynasty, and ordered him to leave Coburg, where he had been staying with his fiancée, and to return immediately to Spain. Neither the Prince nor his future wife accepted this decision, and as the Duchess of Coburg was agreeable to their taking the law into their own hands, they were married at once, and the Prince telegraphed the fact to King Alphonso, intimating that he was quite ready to accept the consequences of his disobedience. Alphonso XIII. was

RESTORED TO FAVOUR

not a tyrant, and the Queen was very fond of her young cousin, and would have been delighted to have her near her at Madrid. He would therefore have forgiven the young couple, but Marie Christine was furious, and insisted on her son punishing the cousin who had thus forgotten the allegiance which he owed to the head of his House. She obliged Alphonso to chastise the rebellious Infante who had thus openly defied his authority, and the Prince and Princess received strict orders to remain in exile and never to dare show their faces in Spain again.

They took it quite philosophically, perhaps because they knew it would not be for a long time, and settled in Coburg, where the Dowager Duchess Marie Alexandrovna was but too glad to have them, and they spent their time very pleasantly, travelling sometimes, and enjoying short trips to Paris, which they both liked, and where the Infanta Eulalia always received them with open arms. Two children were born to them in quick succession, and then the war between Spain and Morocco broke out, and the Infante Alphonso wrote to the King and asked to be allowed to take the field with his former regiment. The permission was granted, and was followed very soon by his reinstatement to favour. He now lives in Madrid, where he and his amiable consort have made themselves general favourites in all classes of society, and where the Infanta Eulalia comes to visit them whenever Paris begins to bore her and she feels she wants to breathe her native air again for a short time.

Beyond the Orleans there exist still two other

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branches of the Bourbon family, those of Naples and of Parma. The latter has entirely settled in Austria, and is very well established. Prince Elias, the best-looking and most intelligent member of the family, has become allied to the Habsburgs by his marriage with the Archduchess Marie Anna, whilst the Princess Zita has been united with the heir presumptive to the Austrian monarchy, Archduke Charles Francis Joseph. Unfortunately, imbecility is supposed to be hereditary among the posterity of the Duchess Marie Louise of Parma, the sister of the Comte de Chambord, and the head of the family, Prince Henry of Parma, is confined in an asylum.

As for the Naples Bourbons, represented by the Count of Caserta, there is not much to say, as there has never been anything approaching a romantic marriage amongst them. They have all been very well brought up and behave well, and have always consulted the code of etiquette and the *Almanach de Gotha* before taking to themselves a husband or a wife. The eldest son of the Count of Caserta is wedded to a princess of Bavaria, and whilst his parents reside the greater part of the year at Cannes, he lives at the castle of Nymphenburg, near Munich. His second brother, Prince Charles of Bourbon Sicily, was the husband of the lovely Princess Marie de las Mercedes of the Asturias, the eldest sister of King Alphonso, and his marriage with her gave rise to a lot of unpleasantness, as neither the Spanish nation nor the Spanish Government wanted the heiress to the throne, as she was at the time, to marry a Bourbon of Naples,

ROYAL HOUSE OF BOURBON

that House being very unpopular in the country ever since the days of the first Queen Christine, the grandmother of Alphonso XII. It was the Regent who, for reasons of her own, had desired this marriage for her daughter, and who insisted on arranging it. Prince Charles was naturalised in Spain and received the title of Infante. His wife died in childbirth three years later, but he kept the dignities which he had acquired through his union with her, and remarried with the Princess Louise of France, the daughter of the Comtesse de Paris, as I have already related, and brought her to Madrid, where they have resided ever since.

As for his sisters, they were very well provided for by the cleverness of the Countess of Caserta, who, though they were almost penniless, nevertheless contrived to secure excellent husbands for them. The eldest, Princess Marie Immaculata, was wedded to Prince John, the brother of the King of Saxony ; the second, Princess Marie Christine, married an archduke of Austria ; and the third and youngest one, the Princess Maria Pia, became the wife of Prince Louis of Braganza, the heir of the Count and Countess d'Eu. These were all unions without any political significance, but most sensible and probably happy. They had nothing romantic about them, and have afforded no food whatever for gossip of any kind.

Indeed, it would be difficult as things stand at present for any marriage contracted by a prince of the Royal House of Bourbon to have any diplomatic importance. Even that of the representative of the elder line, the only son of the famous Don Carlos,

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would be viewed with perfect indifference by the Spanish public. The popularity of King Alphonso XIII. has become so great that there is no longer any risk of a Carlist insurrection breaking out in the country. Don Jaime de Bourbon, who lives almost continually at Frohsdorff, is so far a confirmed bachelor, whilst the matrimonial adventures of two of his sisters are not sufficiently interesting to find a place here.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ENGLISH ROYAL MARRIAGES

IT is quite intentionally that I have allowed this chapter dealing with English Royal marriages to remain until the last. The reason for this apparent neglect is that England, which in so many things shows examples the world would do well to follow, has proved itself particularly wise in the marriages of its reigning House. King Edward, who certainly was one of the foremost—if not the greatest—diplomats of his time, had realised the apparently impossible problem of transforming political unions into love marriages. Thanks to his skill, the establishment of his numerous nieces was conducted on the basis of marriages of affection, and he succeeded in selecting for them husbands whom they could love and who happened to be in love with them, feeling very well that the influence which he wanted them to gain over their consorts would, if their union were founded on mutual affection be far more powerful than it would otherwise be.

To this must be added that it was a tradition in the Royal House of England to marry for love ever since the days of Queen Victoria, who was essentially romantic and of a most affectionate nature. Her own alliance with Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg had been

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founded essentially on the warm feelings with which he had inspired her, and when the time came to establish her daughters she insisted on political reasons being laid aside, which fact led the Royal princesses to make marriages less brilliant perhaps than they could have aspired to, but which offered them far more chances of happiness than attended the wedded lives of so many daughters of foreign Royal or Imperial houses.

To begin with the Princess Victoria, whose union with the future German Crown Prince was a perfect idyll, which no one described better than did the Queen herself in her "Journal," and to end with the alliance contracted by Princess Beatrice with Prince Henry of Battenberg—all the daughters of the Queen were allowed to choose their husbands, and never once did they hear any hint of political reasons entering into their marriage arrangements.

When it came to the question of the establishment of the Sovereign's grandchildren, the same principle was followed; and later on, after the death of the wisest monarch England ever had, it was taken up by her successor, who even enlarged upon it, and almost made it a cardinal principle in his family.

It was during the reign of Queen Victoria that England saw, for the first time, one of its princesses marry a Scottish nobleman who was simply heir to a dukedom. When the engagement of the Princess Louise with the Marquis of Lorne was announced, it caused a nine days' wonder all over the United Kingdom. Some people blamed the leniency of the Queen, who, they affirmed, had established a regrettable prece-

PRINCESS LOUISE .

dent ; whilst others—and these were the majority—extolled the kindness and the wisdom of the Sovereign who, when the happiness of her child came into question, put aside old traditions and preferred to see her wedded to a gentleman with an unimpeachable reputation and high character ; with whose parents, moreover, she had herself been upon terms of affectionate friendship for a considerable number of years.

Nevertheless, the marriage of the Princess Louise opened a new era concerning the future of members of the Royal Family. It added considerably to the popularity of the Queen herself, and drew her even nearer to her subjects than had been the case before, when some voices had blamed her for having allowed the Princess Helena to unite herself to Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, who was considered so poor that one believed it had been only through interested motives that he had wooed and won her—an assertion, by the way, which was as ill-natured as it was unjust.

After the wedding of the Princess Louise, a considerable time passed before any other member of the Royal Family contemplated matrimony, and it was only during the course of the summer of 1878 that England heard of the betrothal of the Queen's second son, the Duke of Edinburgh, with the only daughter of the Tsar, the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna.

This was an exceptionally brilliant marriage, and also one in which politics had a considerable share, as it was supposed to bring about closer relations between the London and the Petersburg Cabinets, which had remained more or less strained ever since the Crimean

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War. The Duke of Edinburgh, who was a very distinguished man indeed, was heir to the Duchy of Coburg and its large domains, whilst the Grand Duchess Marie was bringing to him a huge fortune besides her own amiable self. She was a most accomplished woman in every respect, who had been admirably brought up, and who was considered the cleverest member of her family.

Queen Victoria made no secret of her delight at getting such a daughter-in-law, and took the keenest interest in all the arrangements connected with the wedding, which was solemnised with much magnificence at Petersburg, and was attended by a large number of Royalties, foremost among whom were the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the German Crown Prince and Princess. They all declared themselves enchanted with the hospitality that had been proffered them, and I remember how the Crown Princess on her return to Berlin showed me, with great pleasure, a splendid bracelet with which the Emperor of Russia had presented her on the day of her departure from Petersburg.

The newly married pair started for England a few days after their marriage, and were received at Windsor railway station by the Queen in person, who had driven over to bid her son's bride welcome in her new home. The Duchess of Edinburgh became a great favourite with her mother-in-law, who up to her death entertained the warmest affection for her, and liked to have her about her as much and as often as possible. The two ladies had many characteristics in common, and were drawn to each other at once. The Grand Duchess

DUKE OF CONNAUGHT WEDS

Marie was often heard to say that the only thought which had comforted her at the time of her own mother's death was the feeling that, although she had lost a parent, Queen Victoria was there to replace her.

Six years after the marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh, his brother, the Duke of Connaught, brought home a young bride. This was also a marriage which was only actuated by love on both sides. The Duke had met his future wife at the wedding of the latter's sister, the Princess Marie of Prussia, with Prince Henry of the Netherlands, and from the first moment that he caught sight of her he lost his heart to her, and at once had sought his mother's agreement to the offer which he intended to make to the Princess Louise Margaret. As he was the favourite son of the Queen, the latter insisted upon his nuptials being celebrated in England, and they accordingly took place at Windsor, where the King and Queen of the Belgians also arrived for the occasion. The new Duchess of Connaught at once made herself at home in her new country, and became so English in all her sentiments that she sometimes showed herself even more patriotic in her feelings than her sisters-in-law, who used sometimes to tease her on the subject. Wherever she went, were it to India, Ireland, or Canada, she made many friends and won many admirers, and in all the actions of her life she showed herself an example of what an English princess and the daughter-in-law of a great queen should be.

Her marriage had absolutely no other motive than a deep affection which she and the Duke of Connaught had conceived for each other, and it turned

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out a perfectly happy one, that proved singularly free from the common misfortunes which so often come to cast their shade over human lives. She brought up her children admirably, and never lost one. The ducal couple were always in accord, and the greatest sorrow that ever befell them was the serious illness of the Duchess, whose recovery after her terrible operation a few years ago was for several days despaired of. Not even the present war, with its attendant horrors, has been able to shake their mutual tenderness, because the Duchess has become so thoroughly English in all her sentiments that she thoroughly joined in the very just feelings of execration which the English nation, and indeed the whole of the civilised world, felt for the savage methods of warfare inaugurated by the troops of William II.

Three years after the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, St. George's Chapel at Windsor was again the scene of a gay festivity. The Queen's youngest son, Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, was united to the charming Princess Hélène of Waldeck and Pyrmont, sister of the Queen of the Netherlands, who, together with the King, came over to England to attend the ceremony. This marriage was rudely broken by death, which snatched away the Duke two years later, when his widow retired almost entirely from society and consecrated herself to the education of her two children, of whom the younger had been born after his father's death. As he was to succeed to the Duchy of Coburg upon the demise of his uncle, the Duke of Edinburgh, whose only son had

AN ENGLISH PRINCESS

predeceased him, his mother took him to Germany to educate him. He succeeded to the Duchy in 1900, and when the present war broke out showed himself singularly forgetful of his English origin. His sister, the Princess Alice, has remained a perfect English girl. She had declared that she would never consent to think of any other marriage than an English one. Her determination was carried out, because she became, in time, the wife of Prince Alexander of Teck, the manly and handsome brother of Queen Mary, and she has lived in England ever since, partly at Claremont, the residence of her mother, the widowed Duchess of Albany, and partly at Windsor, where the kindness of the King has given her an apartment in one of the towers of the Castle.

After the nuptials of the Duke of Albany all the children of the Queen found themselves provided for, with the exception of the Princess Beatrice, whom her mother did not seem to care to see leave England for a foreign land. She was truly the strong arm of the venerable Sovereign, whom she surrounded with the greatest care and attention, and who found in her an excellent helpmate in all the business which she had to transact. The Princess was unusually clever, and possessed one quality which is far better even than cleverness—she was tactful and extremely discreet.

No one, looking at this young girl standing so modestly beside her mother, would have imagined that she knew more about the politics of the world than many a cabinet minister, and that the Queen found in her a valuable adviser, whom she could trust

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better than anyone else. Until the death of her mother, the Princess Beatrice never failed for one single day in her filial duty in regard to her, and sacrificed herself entirely for her sake, giving up all the pleasures in which girls delight generally, and arranging the whole tenor of her existence so as to make it fit in with the Queen's requirements. She showed herself a model daughter, and, in time, she was to get her reward for it.

During a journey, which her mother undertook abroad, in the course of which she stopped for a few days at Darmstadt to see her grandchildren who were living there, the Princess Beatrice happened to be thrown into the company of Prince Henry of Battenberg, the brother of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria. He was one of the handsomest men of his generation, and in every way attractive. He inspired the Princess with the warmest feelings, which, however, she did not dare to disclose to the Queen, knowing the unselfishness of the latter, and being convinced that she would not hesitate one moment to sacrifice herself, if she thought that the happiness of her beloved child required it. The Princess knew that without her the existence of the aged Sovereign would be even more deprived of joy than it was already ; she would not be the means of bringing another shadow on the life of her mother. But the Queen was far too perspicacious not to notice that something had occurred to mar her daughter's usual serenity, and she very quickly discovered what was troubling her. With characteristic rapidity of decision she made up her mind that the affections of

A ROYAL SACRIFICE

the Princess Beatrice ought not to be thwarted, and set herself to seek the means by which they could be gratified. Of course, it was relatively easy to put as a condition to her consent to the marriage that the young couple were always to reside with her; but she had far too much experience of life not to know that a man does not generally care to be dependent upon his mother-in-law.

Queen Victoria therefore determined to speak herself with Prince Henry, and to explain to him the situation. She had no reason to repent of her decision, because the Prince understood her at once, and replied to her that he would consider it a special honour if he were permitted to help the Princess Beatrice in her filial mission, but that he had never dared to offer doing so for fear that interested motives might be attributed to him. He had no other fortune except his good looks, and felt shy at the thought that the world might say mercenary reasons had been at the bottom of his marriage with the daughter of the Queen of England. Victoria reassured him as to that point. During the few years that the union of this amiable young Prince with the Princess Beatrice lasted, no cloud of any kind appeared on the horizon to trouble it.

I must relate here an anecdote which, so far as I know, has never yet become public property, and which concerns Prince Henry of Battenberg. Long before he had any thought of becoming the son-in-law of the Queen he was serving as an officer in the Prussian regiment of the Garde du Corps in Berlin, and was a general favourite in society there. I also was at that

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time residing in the German capital, and used to meet Prince Henry very often at the house of a mutual friend. One afternoon the conversation turned on a fortune-teller who was then the fashion, and to whom everybody flocked to know what the future held in store. We were a large party, and decided to go and see her the next day, which we did more out of fun than anything else.

On our arrival the old dame received us with great cordiality, and when we declared that we had no secrets from each other, proceeded to read us a lesson as to what, according to her words, was to happen to us individually. When it came to the turn of Prince Henry, she at first prophesied any amount of prosperity for him, and a charming wife who would bring all that his heart could desire; then, after a while, she added, "I have one thing more to tell you. Whatever you do, beware of a blonde, because evil shall occur to you through her." We all burst out laughing, and for the whole of the winter season, which was then just beginning, we teased poor Prince Henry unmercifully about the "lovely blonde," as we called her, who was to bring evil upon him. This stupid joke acquired later on a sad significance when the Prince died on board the cruiser *Blonde*, on which his remains were brought back to England for burial.

Queen Victoria loved Prince Henry of Battenberg as much as if he had been her own son, and she mourned for him deeply when an untoward fate carried him away in the flower of his age. He had truly been a son to her, and, besides, her heart bled for her devoted daughter,

QUEEN VICTORIA'S HEART

who had thus seen crumble into pieces all the joy and happiness of her life. The sad event drew mother and daughter even closer together than they had been before, and the Queen, in whose service her son-in-law had fallen, felt in a certain sense guilty before his children, and applied herself to bring solace to them by even greater tenderness. Her grandchildren never left her, and until her own death she always interested herself in their doings—both in their studies as well as in their play; and it is not to be doubted that had she lived long enough to see the Princess Ena of Battenberg married to Alphonso XIII., she would have rejoiced at the event even more, perhaps, than she rejoiced at the weddings of her own children.

Queen Victoria was a born match-maker, and though her family always stood more or less in awe of her, yet it was to her that they instinctively turned whenever they happened to be in love. It was to her grandmother that the present Princess Royal, then Princess Louise of Wales, confided that she wished to marry the Earl of Fife, and it was the Queen who broached the subject with the parents of the timid young girl, who had never dared mention it to them herself.

This alliance of the eldest daughter of the Heir Apparent to the Crown of Great Britain with a peer of the realm was also one of those events which gave rise to considerable criticism, but which proved once more the sound common sense of the great Queen, who never consented to be influenced by dynastic reasons where the personal feelings of her family were concerned. She thought first of all of their happiness

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and afterwards at the circumstances attending it, and besides she was too conscious of the dignity of her Crown not to understand that if one of her grand-daughters married a mere peer of the realm she did not lose her rank as a princess of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and that this rank was far superior to any other she might have acquired by a marriage with a foreign prince, even if he were heir to a crown.

Of all the weddings of her children and relatives none interested Queen Victoria so much as the one which her grandson, the Duke of York, contracted with his cousin, the accomplished and beautiful Princess May of Teck, the delightful daughter of a delightful mother, who was also the cherished cousin of the British Sovereign. What especially appealed to the Queen's mind in connection with it was the fact that the Princess May was an Englishwoman, born and bred in England. Victoria, at a time when no one thought about the possibility of foreign relations getting strained or difficult, expressed herself strongly as to the inadvisability of the consorts of monarchs belonging either to another nationality or to another faith than their husbands; and when told that it would be hardly possible for the King of England to wed one of his own subjects, or continually to intermarry in the circle of his immediate relatives, she replied that she did not see why it would be impossible for him to raise to his throne a daughter of the House of Percy or of Graham, considering the fact that Jane Seymour and Catherine Howard had been thought

AN EXCELLENT MARRIAGE

worthy by that most haughty of kings, Henry VIII., to share his throne; and that what had been done once could be done again.

Queen Victoria held the opinion that an English queen would more easily understand the needs of the English nation than a foreigner, who would, first of all, have to get acquainted with the inner life of the country to which she would be a perfect stranger. And when she heard that her grandson, the Duke of Clarence, was desirous of making the Princess May his wife, the Queen hastened to give him her consent, and at once wrote to the Duchess of Teck to tell her how delighted she felt at the Duke's choice.

It is a curious thing, which I do not think is known to the public, that it was the Empress Marie of Russia who, after the lamented death of the Duke of Clarence, suggested to her sister, the Princess of Wales, the idea of arranging a marriage between the Princess May and the Duke of York. In doing so she had probably in mind the story of her own marriage, when, after having been engaged to the Grand Duke Nicholas Alexandrovitch, she was united to his brother after his death. The experience had turned out very well, and this fact more than anything else encouraged the Prince and Princess of Wales to try it on their own account. As fate would have it, the Duke of York had always been much attached to his little cousin, so that he accepted the proposition at once—everyone knows with what excellent results.

All this took place long ago, and now King George and Queen Mary can look forward to the day when

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their own children will in their turn be considering marriage. It would be unseemly on my part to mention here the many rumours which, in Petrograd especially—where everything relating to the English Royal Family is followed with the keenest interest—are going about concerning the eventual marriages of the Princess Mary, and of the Prince of Wales. The Russian nation would dearly like to see the Prince ally himself to the Romanoffs and become the son-in-law of the Tsar. As for his sister, there are any number of grand dukes—among them the Grand Duke Boris, who is so well known in England—whom Russian society would be delighted to see bring home an English bride.

England is so popular in the realms of the Tsar that every new link which would unite it to the Russian nation would be hailed with intense joy, and now that the Royal marriage markets of Europe are closed definitely against Germany, one may, without being unreasonable, hope that this desire may yet come to be fulfilled.

Another reason why I have spoken of the English Royal Family at the end of this book is because, as I want to point out, that among all the European dynasties, the one which sits to-day on the throne of Great Britain has entered more than any other into its national needs, and that in its marriages, as well as in everything else, it has constantly kept in touch with the personal feelings of the nation as well as of those of its princes and princesses. It has avoided the mistake of thinking that a king's marriage can have any influence on the politics of his

JUST MEN AND WOMEN

country when it is one where affection plays the greater part. It has understood that members of a Royal House are men and women like other people, and that it is cruel to expect them to subordinate their hearts to the exigencies of certain political situations, which may change at any moment owing to unforeseen circumstances. In such cases love alone is capable of holding together two people whom the force of education, former customs, and former opinions would otherwise keep asunder, to the misfortune of themselves and of others.

Until Queen Victoria had broken with old traditions and foolish prejudices, the fate of princes—and especially of princesses—of Royal Houses was anything but pleasant. Princesses sometimes had perforce to submit to being married to men whom they had never seen, and sometimes to those whom they could neither love nor respect. Marriages such as that of the Princess Clotilde of Savoy with the cousin of Napoleon III. were bound to turn out badly; they were no more than sacrifices to the necessities of the moment, against which the whole soul, as well as the nobility of nature which made Queen Victoria such an exceptional woman, naturally rose in indignation. She was always a queen in all her actions, as well as in all the decisions which she had to take; but this fact, of which she was fully conscious, only made her more determined not to take advantage of the power which was hers, and she never made her descendants unhappy by forcing them into loveless marriages.

But it must also be added that when the alliance

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of one of her grandchildren did not turn out as successfully as she would have wished, she insisted on the unhappy princess holding to her part of the bargain, and would not hear of either divorce or separation. When the Princess Louise of Schleswig-Holstein, the eldest child of Princess Christian, found her life with Prince Aribert of Anhalt, to whom she was wedded, so unbearable that it even became for her a question of dignity not to submit to it any longer, it was most difficult to bring the Queen to look upon the question in the same light, and it was only with great repugnance that she at last sanctioned the divorce proceedings which the young Princess found herself compelled to take. And when the Grand Duke of Hesse and his consort implored her to allow them to part, she would absolutely not hear of it, and expressed herself so strongly on the subject that it was only after her death that the divorce to which she objected so strenuously took place at last.

I think that what I have written here will be sufficient to convey to the reader my opinion that of all Royal Houses in Europe the dynasty which occupies the throne of England has made the wisest marriages, and altogether has given the best examples to its subjects. It is perhaps on that account that the feelings of loyalty which the English people possess always find strongest expression in moments of great national crisis. The King and the Royal Family are respected—which is not always the case in other countries.

It is quite certain that the marriages of Royal personages will once more acquire the importance

FUTURE ALLIANCES

which they had lost during the last fifty or sixty years. Sovereigns and their relatives will need to be much more careful in their alliances, and the spirit of nationalism which has lately come so much to the front will also invade Royal Houses, the members of which will become more and more chary at the thought of leaving their own country.

This will, of course, limit the circle and the sphere in which it will be possible for them to find husbands and wives, and the most likely result will be that marriages between Royal personages and those of lesser rank will become more usual than has been the case before. At least, they will not be looked upon with the disapproval and the astonishment which they excited in former times. The example of Queen Victoria, who arranged the wedding of her own daughter with a marquis, and of the Princess Frederica of Hanover with a baron, will always prove that one of the most autocratic sovereigns in the world admitted this possibility.

It is probable that the democratic element will also invade the homes of kings, an evolution which is likely to be to the advantage of their subjects, because the introduction of new and healthy elements amid the narrow circle in which Royalty has moved until this day cannot fail to do it some good by bringing it nearer to the rest of humanity. On the other hand, the marriages of heirs, apparent or presumptive, will become a far more serious affair than it was before, as of necessity it will involve so many grave interests, and so many complications unknown before the present

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war, and the changes which it is bound to bring about in the whole of Europe.

If we consider that France is a republic, and that Italy is far too Catholic a country—in spite of the excommunication which the Holy See has launched at the head of the Savoy dynasty—to admit mixed marriages, we find that only Denmark, Sweden and Norway can furnish princesses with whom English and Russian princes can be united. Holland does not come into account because it is only a husband to a reigning queen who will be required there in the next generation. This leads me to repeat that in all human probability the House of Romanoff is bound to become united to that of Saxe-Coburg. One feels that this will be so in Russia, where the nation instinctively turns towards England, and looks up to it to help it to enter into a new road, leading towards renewed prosperity. And the fact that the German elements, which at one time were so powerful at the Russian Court, will never more be able to assert themselves, will help the Russian nation to realise that its best chances for the future lie in a closer alliance with England. Family ties binding together the dynasties that rule over these two countries would consolidate the nations for their general welfare and strengthen them in their common progress.

So far as the rest of this book is concerned, I have tried to interest my readers by stories and anecdotes relating to the family alliances of all the great Royal dynasties of Europe. I have told the

COMING CHANGES

circumstances which have accompanied the respective marriages of well-known royalties, and also discussed the chances of future unions they might find themselves obliged to contract—stories which, in our democratic times, may still be found amusing by those who are interested in the sayings and doings of Royalty. Such readers will discover many subjects of discussion in these stories, which I have related to the best of my memory. Perhaps, also, they will wonder at the facts disclosed, and ask how it is possible that Sovereigns can have the same feelings as simple mortals, and can be subjected to the same miseries, the same deceptions, and the same impressions of sorrow and of joy.

Whoever may read these pages cannot but realise the truth of the beautiful words of the late Empress Frederick, the Princess Royal of England, "Broken hearts can be found in palaces just as well as in hovels." Love and death are the two forces which no one can escape, and which every human being, be he rich or poor, high or low, must experience.

Until the present, kings were popularly supposed to be different from the rest of humanity, and not to suffer or to feel as others did. They were thought superior in everything, but were condemned to submit to certain rules which disposed of their hearts as well as of their bodies, and by always being obliged to dwell in an atmosphere of pomp and majesty, were forced to stifle in their breasts all the feelings of love or of hate which they would have given much to be able to express. At present it is probable that things

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will change—they have altered already ; and for the future, kings, though they may not be allowed to wed shepherdesses, will nevertheless be permitted to choose for themselves, where formerly their wives were chosen for them by others. Politics, of course, will still have something to do with the marriages of the rulers of the world, but these politics will take into consideration the interests of nations, not those of dynasties only.

In the meanwhile, it has seemed to me not to be without interest to present, as I have done, the story of how the existing Royal marriages in Europe have been contracted, and the diplomacy which in some cases lurked behind them ; and also to examine the various possibilities as to the name and personality of the future brides of future Sovereigns. In doing so I have probably made many mistakes and more than one blunder. My excuse consists in the fact that I have not been trying to write an historical book, but simply a volume destined to provide some amusement to people having an hour to idle away.

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